

Adverse effects caused by THC exposure are rare at recreational doses in adults. Children are more susceptible to toxicity.

## Toxicity / Risk Assessment

**Synthetic cannabinoids/cannabinoid receptor agonists are NOT cannabis and cause more significant toxicity (see Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonist guideline)**

*Paediatric exposure can lead to significant CNS depression, hypotonia and hyporeflexia*

*Ingestion of cannabis-laced food can cause unpredictable, delayed and prolonged effects*

### **Clinical features:**

- Relaxation, mild euphoria, disinhibition and mild sedation can occur with low doses
- Significant adverse psychoactive effects including anxiety, psychosis and changes in perception are more likely with increasing doses
- Postural hypotension can occur with larger doses
- **Chronic THC** use is associated with decreased motivation
- Chronic daily high dose cannabis use is associated with hyperemesis syndrome (vomiting, colicky abdominal pain and craving for hot showers to relieve symptoms)

## Management

Good supportive care is the mainstay of treatment. Adult patients rarely require critical care following oral ingestion. However, children may occasionally require intubation.

### **Agitation/adverse psychological effects (severe agitation is rare)**

**Benzodiazepines:** Diazepam 2.5 - 5 mg IV q10 minute or 5 -10 mg PO q30 minute until lightly sedated  
**OR Droperidol:** 5 - 10 mg IM / IV

### **Postural hypotension** (rarely requires treatment)

- Treat initially with 20 mL/kg of IV crystalloid

### **CNS depression**

- Intubation / ventilation may be required for airway protection and respiratory support (children)

### **Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome (exclude other surgical causes before the diagnosis is made)**

- See separate *Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome* guideline

## Disposition

- Discharge pending mental health assessment if clinically well 4 hours post exposure
- Patients with severe adverse effects or withdrawal symptoms may need admission for symptomatic treatment