

There are hundreds of medical marijuana strains to choose from, but almost all can be categorized as cannabis *sativa*, cannabis *indica*, or cannabis *hybrid*. There is another type - cannabis *ruderalis* - but its low THC content means that it is rarely used for recreational purposes. It is high in CBDs, though, so it has proven effective for some as a medical treatment without the “high” feeling.

For this article, though, we will be focusing on sativa, indica, and hybrid. Each variety has its own pros and cons, including how they impact an individual and what conditions they can help with. We’ve put together a straightforward guide to medical marijuana strains that will help you decide which cannabis product is right for you.

## Medical Marijuana Strains: Sativa vs. Indica

In basic terms, sativa and indica are both different types of marijuana. The two different strains originate from different parts of the world, look distinctly different from one another, and tend to have different generalized effects on those who consume it. These differences are particularly important for growers, because each strain has different growth patterns and yields. For the average medical marijuana smoker, however, the important aspect is how each strain makes them feel.

“...it is actually the indicas that have the strongest analgesic effect when it comes to medical cannabis, it’s usually the sativas that have a higher amount of THC compared to CBDs.”

-5 Differences Between Sativa and Indica

<http://www.hightimes.com/read/5-differences-between-sativa-and-indica>

“On average, Cannabis sativa has higher levels of CBD compared to THC, whereas Cannabis indica has higher levels of THC to CBD. However, huge variability exists within either species. There are three chemotaxonomic types of Cannabis: one with high levels of THC, one which is more fibrous and has higher levels of CBD, and one that is an intermediate between the two.

Cannabis strains with relatively high CBD:THC ratios are less likely to induce anxiety than vice versa. This may be due to CBD's antagonistic effects at the cannabinoid receptors, compared to THC's partial agonist effect. CBD is also a 5-HT1A receptor (serotonin) agonist, which may also contribute to an anxiolytic-content effect. The effects of sativa are well known for its cerebral high, while indica is well known for its sedative effects which some prefer for night time use. Both types are used as medical cannabis. Indica plants are normally shorter and stockier than sativas. They have broader, deeply serrated leaves and a compact and dense flower cluster. The effects of indicas are predominantly physical and sedative.”

-Cannabis Sativa, Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis\\_sativa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_sativa)

## Medical Marijuana Strains: Sativa

Sativa strains generally provide energy and an uplifted feeling. This makes it helpful medically as a treatment for depression and other mood disorders. Smokers often think of sativa as a strain to use during the day, whereas indica is to be used at night. Sativa is ideal for those seeking creativity, energy, or daily pain management that allows one to be present and productive.

## Medical Marijuana Strains: Indica

Indica strains tend to provide more of a relaxing or even sedative effect. They are best for insomnia, anxiety, and pain associated with tension. Many smokers consider sativa to be an “up” strain, and indica as a “down” strain. There is a term often associated with indica cannabis - “couch lock”. This is the stereotypical stoner concept of being stuck on the couch after smoking. This can actually hold true for either type of medical marijuana strain, but it is more common with indicas.

## Medical Marijuana Strains: Hybrid

Growers have cultivated hundreds of varieties of indica and sativa cannabis, including many combination hybrid strains. These can offer the benefits of both types, or the benefit of one type without the drawbacks. One strain, for example, might provide the anxiety relief of an indica, but with the energy and motivation of a sativa.

## Medical Marijuana Strains: How To Choose

Your doctor or budtender can recommend just the right strain for your particular health issues, needs, and wants. Most smokers find that trial and error is necessary for finding just the right medical marijuana strain. You might find that you prefer multiple strains for different needs or occasions. The internet offers plenty of assistance in choosing the best strain. One of the best tools available is the Cannabis Strain and Infused Product Explorer, <https://www.leafly.com/explore> which sorts out each type in a sort of periodic table of elements. You can filter by location, strain type, rating, etc. Then you can click on each strain for a detailed description, including user reviews that rank flavor, effect, scent, appearance, availability, and more.

When using medical marijuana strains, it is important to consume cannabis in the healthiest manner possible. Ideally this means using a vaporizer or e-pen (vape pen), as this is easier on the lungs than a joint, pipe, or bong. Whatever you choose, though, be sure to #smokeclean and keep it sanitary by wiping your piece with Pipe Wipes before each inhale.