



CBD Use in Exotic Pets

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1. **What is CBD?** CBD is an abbreviation for Cannabidiol, a cannabinoid that is extracted from Cannabis (Marijuana). There are 2 main strains of Cannabis: **Hemp**, which contains higher levels of cannabidiol and has a higher amount of fiber in the stalk; and **Marijuana** which contains higher levels of the psychotropic THC, and very low levels of fiber. CBD/Hemp has no psychoactive effects but has several medicinal properties.

There are numerous additional compounds present in the Cannabis plant, including cannabinoids, terpenes and terpenoids, flavonoids, non-cannabinoid phenols, and nitrogenous compounds. Cannabis' beneficial effects are due to synergistic interactions among all of these compounds. This has been called the "entourage effect", which means that the potency of the whole plant is stronger than the effect of the individual components.
2. **What can CBD do?** CBD is used in humans for acute and chronic pain relief, antiseizure, anti-psychotic, anti-anxiety effects, and to treat side effects from cancer, like vomiting and decreased appetite. CBD is not approved for use in animals. Very few studies have been performed, so the correct dosing and adverse effects are not known. However, the few studies performed have shown it to be safe.
3. **How does CBD work?** The mechanisms by which CBD may be medically beneficial are not clear. CBD antagonizes agonists of cannabinoid receptors and so may be most useful in those conditions characterized by endocannabinoid hyperactivity. Studies have shown that CBD also binds to 5HT(1a) receptors as a partial agonist and also to opioid receptors (mu and delta subtypes). Finally, some data suggest that CBD binds to PPAR-gamma receptors.
4. **Is CBD legal?** Marijuana is classified as a Schedule I drug by the DEA, along with heroin, LSD, cocaine, and methamphetamines. In September 2018 the DEA removed CBD containing no more than 0.1%

THC from the list of Schedule I drugs. This version of CBD is now classified as a Schedule V drug along with Robitussin AC and Lyrica. But the DEA stated that only FDA-approved CBD drugs are Schedule V, and the only FDA-approved CBD drug is Epidiolex to treat seizures in humans.

So according to the Federal government, all cannabis products except Epidiolex are illegal. But several states have legalized or decriminalized cannabis. California allows for the sale and consumption of cannabis and cannabis-derived products for medicinal and recreational use – in humans. There are no laws stating that cannabis products are allowed for use in animals.

Based on the Federal law, unless a veterinarian has a specific DEA license to work with schedule 1 substances (which only a few veterinarians in research settings have) they cannot distribute, dispense, or possess CBD. While not explicitly stated in the Controlled Substances Act, a veterinarian (or physician) cannot prescribe schedule I substances.

In 2018 California passed legislation that allows veterinarians to discuss and recommend cannabis in animal patients without being penalized, but they still may not dispense or administer cannabis products to patients.

Many other states have not decriminalized cannabis products yet. If you are caught flying with cannabis products, you will be subject to Federal law and arrested.

5. **How do I know which product to use?** There are hundreds of CBD oil products available online and at health food and pet stores. The main ingredient is listed as Hemp oil. Some will contain coconut oil as the carrier. CBD containing other cannabinoids, terpenes, and terpenoids is better than CBD alone. These compounds work synergistically for a better therapeutic effect. Terpenes and terpenoids are considered safe by the FDA. But buyer beware - analysis of several products by the FDA in recent years revealed that the CBD content varied and in many products was either absent, less than or even higher than the label claimed. There is currently no regulation for these products. One way to evaluate a product is to check the website and see if the company lists the Certificate of Analysis (COA). The company will send the product to a lab that will identify all the compounds in the product. In good companies they will perform a COA on every batch. Another way to tell if the product works is to try it and see if you see improvement. But be aware that if you take a CBD product yourself, there is the possibility of the placebo effect causing you to feel better.

6. **Which one do you recommend?** I have researched CBD use in pets and looked up several recommended products. The website RAVE Reviews released a list of the best CBD products for pets based on customer reviews, quality and price. I looked at these products' websites and many of them look good. I have also tried a few brands in my own pets.
- a. HempRx by RxVitamins: I saw the most significant results with this one in my pets and in 80% of the patients I recommended it to. RxVitamins is also a company that has produced numerous supplements that veterinarians all over the US have been using for many years, so it is a company I trust.
 - b. Receptra Naturals
 - c. Lazarus Naturals
 - d. 4 Corners Cannabis- Pet Tincture
 - e. Pure Hemp Botanicals
 - f. Pet Releaf