



People tend to make a huge discussion out of the whole CBD isolate vs. full-spectrum debate, treating it as if it's some sort of ultra-complex riddle that takes years and years of advanced scientific study to figure out. In reality, though, it's really not that difficult.

In this article, we'll talk about what's exactly meant by the terms "isolate" and "full-spectrum," and we'll also discuss which particular products are best suited for which specific medical conditions (and hint-hint, you may be surprised to find out what some new research has to say).

There's no denying that CBD oil is one of the fastest rising industries North America (and not to mention the globe) has seen in decades, so it pays to be up-to-date on what the medication is, how it works, and how it's made.

## What is CBD, first of all, and how is it made?



CBD is simply an active chemical compound, or cannabinoid, that's found in the cannabis plant. The reason it's becoming so popular across such a wide audience of people right now though is because unlike the other main compound in cannabis (THC), it doesn't get you high. There have been thousands upon thousands of medical studies showing all of the health benefits that CBD has, but "average" people are loving it because it doesn't produce any mind-altering psychoactive effects.

Also, it's important to be able to distinguish between the terms "hemp," "marijuana," and "cannabis."

Basically, cannabis is an umbrella term that includes both hemp and marijuana plants. Cannabis sativa is actually the scientific name of the cannabis plant (Cannabis = genus; sativa = species), and hemp and marijuana are just two different “varieties” of it (i.e. you could refer to both marijuana and hemp plants as “cannabis” plants, but you would not, for instance, refer to a “marijuana” plant as a “hemp” plant). Hopefully that’s not too confusing.

The key difference between hemp and marijuana is that hemp contains practically zero THC. In fact, in order to be classified as hemp, a cannabis plant must contain less than 0.3% THC by volume. This is really important because it’s actually the reason why hemp products are legal to buy, sell, and ship. If they don’t get you high, then why would they be illegal?

Also, it’s important to understand that the majority of CBD oils and other CBD products come from hemp. This is why the industry is seeing such a monstrous spike in popularity – anyone can get online and order CBD medication straight to their doorstep.

If you’re trying to keep track of all this, basically just remember the following:

- Marijuana mostly contains both THC and CBD, it gets you high, and, depending on the state you live in, it is illegal
- Hemp contains minor amounts of THC.
- Hemp contains other cannabinoids, one of them is CBD
- Both hemp and marijuana plants fall under the larger umbrella term of “cannabis” plants

In terms of how CBD is extracted from the cannabis plant, there are a few different techniques that can be used. The most popular used to be by running harsh chemicals like butane (lighter fluid) or hexane over the raw plant material, but people quickly found out that this resulted in trace amounts of carcinogenic compounds (like formaldehyde) being left over in the end product. Not good.

While a bunch of manufacturers still use this method (do your research on the products you’re buying), many are now switching over to a method called CO2 extraction, which is much cleaner and believed to be much more healthy.

Also, cold ethanol extraction is supposedly another good method, but the verdict is still out on how much safer this is than actual butane extraction.

In any regard, the exact extraction process determines whether the active CBD compound is removed from the plant as an “isolate,” or as a “full-spectrum” oil.

## CBD isolate vs. full-spectrum oil: A general comparison

A CBD isolate is exactly what it sounds like; pure, isolated CBD compound, all by itself. It exists as a white-ish powder, and contains no other active compounds – nothing.

It was initially believed that pure CBD was the “gold standard” of non-psychoactive cannabis therapy, but recently people are figuring out that this is hardly the case (more on that later).

Full-spectrum oil, on the other hand, contains other active plant compounds in addition to the CBD. This includes other cannabinoids such as CBN, CBL, and CBCVA, as well as aromatic (nice smelling) cannabis terpenes like pinene and limonene.

So other than the presence of cannabis compounds, what’s the difference between full-spectrum CBD oil and CBD isolate? How do you know which one you need?

## How to choose between full-spectrum CBD oil and CBD isolate

Like we mentioned a moment ago, it used to be the belief that “pure CBD,” or CBD isolate, packed the most potent punch in terms of cannabis therapy. And that would make sense too, right? If we know that CBD is primarily the active compound in the plant that provides the medical relief and therapy, then wouldn’t it make sense to make a 100% pure powder out of it?

Well not necessarily, as it turns out.

Not too long ago (2015, actually), researchers out of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem’s Lautenberg Center for General and Tumor Immunology discovered what’s now called the “entourage effect.” This refers to the functioning of CBD along with other cannabis plant compounds, rather than just by itself.

(And a quick side note, it’s important to point out that Israel’s Hebrew University of Jerusalem is kind of the Epicenter of CBD research. It was here that Dr. Raphael Mechoulam first identified the chemical structure of the cannabinoid back in the 1960’s).

Anyway, the research showed that in mice, CBD was much more effective when used along with other compounds of the cannabis plant, than when it was used by itself. While they haven’t yet figured out why exactly this is the case, it’s now generally accepted that full-spectrum CBD oil is more effective at treating the majority of medical conditions, than is CBD isolate.

And if you ask around, you'll find that the vast majority of frequent CBD users strongly agree with this. In fact, for conditions like anxiety, depression, and chronic pain, nearly every single CBD patient will claim that full-spectrum oil is by far the superior option.

## Final notes: CBD isolate vs. full-spectrum oil

That being said, though, CBD isolate still has a very relevant place in the cannabis market. A lot of people, for instance, use it to concoct their own personal daily CBD remedies – they mix the pure powder with oil, or they add it into their coffee, or they make edibles out of it. Since it comes in an easily-measurable powder, it's a great option for those individuals who are trying to calculate exact personal dosages of CBD medication by the milligram.

For the large majority of average users though, a high-quality full-spectrum CBD oil will be the better, more efficient option. These concentrated oils have delivered incredible results so far, and have been observed to effectively treat everything from anxiety, to diabetes, to severe chronic pain. And with the inevitable continued research that's to come, it's expected that the quality of full-spectrum products will only continue to get better and better. (And of course, given that hemp products are legal in all 50 states, you don't even need a medical marijuana card to purchase it).

That being said, though, it's still important to do plenty of research and find a reliable CBD manufacturer, before you go throwing money at any old product. Since the market is still unregulated by the FDA, there are loads of phony companies out there that are selling completely bogus products. We recommend only using oils from reliable companies with a proven track record.