

Understanding Cannabis for Pets: Safety, Benefits, and What Every Pet Owner Should Know

When I first heard someone mention "cannabis for pets" a few years ago, I admit I was sceptical. My own dog, a nervous rescue terrier named Pip, had struggled with thunderstorm anxiety for years. I had tried everything from pressure wraps to pheromone diffusers, and nothing seemed to help. So when a friend suggested a hemp-derived CBD oil product for dogs, I was cautious but curious. What I learned since then, both from research and from speaking with veterinarians, is that the conversation around cannabis for pets is more nuanced than most headlines suggest.

The key distinction, and one that cannot be overstated, is the difference between tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and non-psychoactive cannabinoids like CBD. THC is the compound responsible for the "high" in humans, and it can be toxic to pets, especially dogs. Cannabis for pets, in the legitimate wellness space, almost always refers to products that contain negligible or zero THC. Instead, these products rely on hemp-derived CBD and other phytocannabinoids that interact with the animal's own endocannabinoid system without causing intoxication.

The Endocannabinoid System in Pets

Dogs, cats, and even horses have an endocannabinoid system, just like humans do. This system helps regulate mood, appetite, pain perception, and immune response. When an animal experiences chronic stress or inflammation, their endocannabinoid function can become imbalanced. Some researchers refer to this as a "canine endocannabinoid deficiency," a condition where the body does not produce enough of its own cannabinoids to maintain homeostasis. Supplementing with plant-based cannabinoids like CBD may help restore that balance.

This is where the concept of veterinary cannabis enters the picture. While the term "veterinary cannabis" can sound alarming, it generally refers to nutraceutical products designed for animals, not psychoactive marijuana. These products are often formulated as edible treats or oils, with precise dosing guidelines to ensure pet safety. The American Veterinary Medical Association has published clear warnings against giving pets any product containing THC, but it has also acknowledged the potential benefits of hemp-derived CBD for conditions like canine anxiety and arthritis.



Common Conditions That May Benefit

Most of the research on [cannabis for pets](#) so far has focused on a few key areas. The first and most widely studied is canine anxiety. Separation anxiety, noise phobias, and travel stress are all conditions where pet owners report improvement after using CBD oil or hemp treats. In my own experience, Pip responded well to a low dose of pet CBD oil given about 45 minutes before a storm. She still knew the storm was coming, but she did not pace or pant. She simply lay down and rested. That was a meaningful change for us.

Another area is feline wellness, though it is less studied. Cats are notoriously sensitive to both medications and supplements. Their livers metabolise compounds differently than dogs do, which makes dosing guidelines even more critical. Some cat owners report that CBD helps

with urinary tract stress and general anxious behaviour, but I would always recommend starting with the lowest possible dose and consulting a veterinarian who is familiar with pet pharmacokinetics.

There is also growing interest in the neuroprotective properties of CBD. Early research suggests that cannabinoids may help protect nerve cells from damage, which could be relevant for older pets experiencing cognitive decline. While we are still far from clinical consensus, the potential is promising enough that several companies now offer nutraceutical chews specifically formulated for senior dogs.

What to Look For in a Product

Not all pet CBD products are created equal. The market has grown quickly, and quality varies widely. Here are a few things I have learned to look for:

- Third-party lab testing: A reputable brand publishes certificates of analysis showing exactly how much CBD and THC are in each batch. The THC level should be below 0.3%.
- Hemp-derived CBD: Hemp is a variety of cannabis that naturally contains very low THC. Products made from hemp are legal in most regions and are the safest option for pets.
- Clear dosing guidelines: Good products list milligrams of CBD per treat or per dropper, and they give weight-based recommendations for dogs and cats.
- Minimal ingredients: Avoid products with artificial flavours, preservatives, or added sugars. Simple is better when it comes to pet supplements.

I have seen products marketed as "cannabis for pets" that actually contain delta-8 THC or other synthetic cannabinoids. These are not safe. Stick with brands that are transparent about their sourcing and testing. Kush Station, for example, offers a range of pet health products including nutraceutical pet treats that are formulated with hemp-derived CBD and other pet focus herbals. Their approach is grounded in quality control, which matters enormously when the end user is a member of your family.



Dosing and Safety Considerations

Pet pharmacokinetics, or how an animal's body processes a substance, is different from human pharmacokinetics. Dogs have more cannabinoid receptors in their brain stems, which is part of why THC is more dangerous for them than for people. Even a small amount of THC can cause disorientation, vomiting, and in severe cases, seizures. This is why the American Veterinary Medical Association strongly advises against giving pets any product that contains THC.

For CBD, the general rule of thumb is 1 to 2 milligrams of CBD per kilogram of body weight, but this can vary depending on the condition being treated and the individual animal. Starting low

and observing your pet's response over several days is the safest approach. If you notice any lethargy, drooling, or digestive upset, stop the product and consult your vet.

I also want to address a common misconception: that CBD will make your pet "high." It will not. High-quality pet CBD products contain only trace amounts of THC, far below the threshold needed for psychoactive effects. The goal is not to alter your pet's state of mind, but to support their body's natural ability to find balance. That is the real promise of cannabis for pets when it is done responsibly.

The Bigger Picture

As public perception of cannabis continues to shift, more pet owners are curious about whether these products could help their animals. The answer, based on what we know today, is that hemp-derived CBD and other non-psychoactive cannabinoids may offer real support for certain conditions, especially anxiety, inflammation, and age-related discomfort. But this is not a substitute for veterinary care, and it is not a magic bullet.



The most responsible approach is to educate yourself on the science, choose products from trusted sources, and always prioritise your pet's safety over marketing claims. The field of veterinary cannabis is still young, and we will likely learn much more in the coming years. For now, the best we can do is stay informed, stay cautious, and keep asking good questions.

If you are considering trying these products, talk to your veterinarian first. Many vets are now open to discussing CBD, especially if you bring them a specific product and dosage plan. And remember: not every pet will respond the same way. What worked for my dog Pip may not work

for yours. That is okay. The goal is to find what helps your pet live a more comfortable, less anxious life, and to do it in the safest way possible.