

FAQs: Legalization of Cannabis

1. What does the “legalization of cannabis” mean?

The “legalization of cannabis” means changing the law so that it will become legal for Canadians to purchase, possess, and consume cannabis. To do this, the Government of Canada introduced the *Cannabis Act*. This law will create new rules that would allow adults to purchase, possess and consume cannabis, and create stronger punishments for people who give cannabis to young people.

2. Why does the Government of Canada want to legalize cannabis?

The Government of Canada has stated that the prohibition of cannabis under our criminal law does not work. Too many young people can access cannabis, too many Canadians get caught up in the criminal justice system for minor offences, too many Canadians have criminal records as a result of these minor offences, and it profits organized crime. Legalizing cannabis, the federal government argues, will create a more effective regulatory system to address these issues.

3. What are the Government of Canada’s goals for legalizing cannabis?

The Government of Canada’s stated goals are to:

- Restrict youth access to cannabis;
- Protect young people from promotion or enticements to use cannabis;
- Deter and reduce criminal activity by imposing serious criminal penalties for those breaking the law, especially those who import, export or provide cannabis to youth;
- Protect public health through strict product safety and quality requirements;
- Reduce the burden on the criminal justice system;
- Provide for the legal production of cannabis to reduce illegal activities;
- Allow adults to possess and access regulated, quality controlled legal cannabis;
- Enhance public awareness of the health risks associated with cannabis.

To learn more about the Government of Canada’s plan and the status of the *Cannabis Act* visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/policing/justice/legalization-regulation-marijuana.html>

4. Is cannabis legal now?

No. Cannabis is still illegal. The only exception is if a doctor has prescribed cannabis for a medical reason and the cannabis is obtained from a producer licenced by the Government of Canada. Cannabis will only be legal *after* the new federal government’s *Cannabis Act* comes into force.

5. When will cannabis become legal?

The federal government has said that it will implement the *Cannabis Act* and legalize cannabis by July 2018. However, it will be up to Nunavut to make decisions about how this will apply in the territory.

6. What will the Government of Nunavut be responsible for once the *Cannabis Act* comes into force?

Even though the federal government is legalizing cannabis, Nunavut can make decisions on how it is implemented in our territory. This includes determining:

- How cannabis can be sold;
- Where cannabis can be consumed (e.g. restrictions on smoking in public);
- Whether to increase the federal minimum age of 18 to buy and use cannabis;
- How many plants people can grow at home (with a federal maximum of four plants per household);
- How much cannabis an individual can possess (with a federal maximum of 30 grams per person at any given time); and
- Public education and awareness on: the health risks of cannabis, drug-impaired driving, and workplace safety relating to cannabis impairment.

7. What is the proposed legal age that individuals can purchase and use cannabis?

The federal *Cannabis Act* proposes a minimum age of 18 years old. However, Nunavut along with other provinces and territories can decide to raise this age if they so choose.

8. How will cannabis be sold?

It will be up to Nunavut to decide how cannabis can be bought and sold in the territory.

9. Will people be able to grow cannabis at home?

The federal government's *Cannabis Act* will allow people to grow a small amount of cannabis at home - up to four plants. However, Nunavut can choose to place further restrictions on growing cannabis in the home, including allowing fewer plants).

10. Will people be able to smoke cannabis in public?

It will be up to Nunavut to decide where cannabis can be consumed, including whether to make rules restricting public use similar to rules restricting drinking alcohol or smoking tobacco in public.

11. Will driving while "high" or under the influence of cannabis continue to be a crime?

Yes. Even after the federal government's *Cannabis Act* becomes law it will still be a serious crime to drive while impaired from using cannabis, like drunk driving. Currently, a conviction for impaired driving can result in a prison term of up to 5 to 10 years.

12. What if people consume cannabis and go to work "high"?

Legalizing cannabis will not give people the right to show up to work “high” or to consume cannabis freely in the workplace. Similar to alcohol, employers will be able to set rules and take action to deal with employees who show up to work impaired. Employers will also be able to take action where an employee’s cannabis use threatens workplace safety or it prevents them from doing their job.

13. What happens if someone gives cannabis to a minor after cannabis is legalized?

Even after cannabis is legalized giving cannabis to a minor will still be a serious crime. In fact, the *Cannabis Act* will increase the penalties for giving cannabis to minors, which can include up to 14 years in prison.

14. Will cannabis be advertised, promoted or displayed for sale?

The federal government’s *Cannabis Act* will restrict the advertising, promoting or displaying of cannabis products, similar to the rules set for tobacco products.

15. Will the legalization of cannabis change access to medical marijuana?

No. Nunavummiut will still be able to get and use medical marijuana through a prescription from a doctor.

16. What is the Government of Nunavut doing in response to the federal government’s decision to legalize cannabis?

The Government of Nunavut is committed to exploring all options to prepare for and address the legalization of cannabis. The GN has created a Working Group on Cannabis Legalization to lead this review. To help guide its efforts, the Working Group is conducting preliminary stakeholder consultations and a public survey.

The goal of these preliminary consultations is to get valuable feedback from Nunavummiut to help the Working Group develop legislative and policy options in time for the July 2018 deadline. Since Nunavut is holding an election this fall, the next government will make the final decision and hold further consultations on how best to respond to cannabis legalization next year.

17. What happens if Nunavut does not have its own legislation ready in time when the *Cannabis Act* to come into force?

If Nunavut does not have legislation ready it will have to follow all the rules set by the federal *Cannabis Act*. This would include the federal rules for minimum age to get and use cannabis (18 years old), how much a person can possess (up to 30 grams), and how cannabis can be purchased (by mail order from the Government of Canada).