

## Access to Medicinal Cannabis Act 2016



In April 2016 the Victorian Government passed legislation allowing access to cannabis products for medicinal use in exceptional circumstances.

Although medicinal cannabis is not currently available to those affected by cancer, it is anticipated that they will be among the next groups to be considered.

### What does the new Act mean?

The *Access to Medicinal Cannabis Act 2016* governs the regulation, manufacture, supply, prescription and administration of medicinal cannabis in Victoria. It makes the use of medicinal cannabis legal for patients with specific medical conditions or symptoms, and for other patients in exceptional circumstances.

### When will it start?

The Government is taking a phased approach to implementation of the medicinal cannabis scheme, with limited patient access expected to begin in 2017.

### Who can use medicinal cannabis?

Children with severe epilepsy will be able to access legal medicinal cannabis products from early 2017.



### For more information:

Please visit Department of Health and Human Services - Medicinal Cannabis

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/drugs-and-poisons/medicinal-cannabis>

For information and support call **13 11 20** to speak with a cancer nurse or email **askanurse@cancervic.org.au**.

For support in other languages call 13 14 50.

An Independent Medical Advisory Committee, appointed by the Minister for Health, will advise on which groups of patients should be eligible to access medicinal cannabis products in the future. Other patients who don't have one of the recommended eligible medical conditions will also be able to access medicinal cannabis in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances haven't been defined yet, but guidance on this is expected within the next 12 months.

### What medicinal cannabis products will be available?

The Independent Medical Advisory Committee will also advise on which types of medicinal cannabis products should be approved. No products that are designed to be smoked by patients will be approved.

### Who can prescribe it?

Doctors need to apply to the Department of Health and Human Services to be authorised to prescribe medicinal cannabis to a patient.

Generally only medical specialists will be able to apply, but they can also ask for other doctors such as GPs and specialists to prescribe medical cannabis to their patient.

Any doctor will be able to apply to prescribe to a patient in exceptional circumstances.