

AFFINITY

# **Patient Handbook**

## About Affinity

Affinity (licensed under Liberty Compassion, Inc.) was founded in 2017 to provide Massachusetts patients with safe access to medical marijuana. We believe patients and customers will be well cared for by our team of smart, motivated, and collaborative professionals focused on creating, producing, and delivering superior products and service. Affinity's commitment to our employees, patients, host communities, and planet, inspires us to provide a thoughtful variety of craft-level, safe, and effective strains and modes of delivery.

The effort to create a best-in-class company began with our new production facility in Clinton, Massachusetts. The design of the facility was thoughtfully considered, and Affinity made the investment to address the challenge of preventing mold and mildew that has been problematic for many facilities in the Northeast. Our extraction partnership gives us a scientifically rigorous production system, which results in greater purity, control, and consistency when extracting the many varied compounds present in the cannabis plant.

As we built our core team, we held to high standards to build a business that would stand out from the competition. Our cultivation leadership team moved east from California after 15 years growing out there. We successfully recruited someone with product formulation and marijuana testing experience to head up extraction and laboratory. Inventory and compliance management joined us after many years managing inventory for a large national consumer goods store. Security is run by a former Police Chief, known and well-respected throughout the state. Our production facility and team is managed by an experienced operations professional who puts his military background to good use.

Our team is determined and passionate about doing great work on behalf of our patients (and neighbors), every day. At Affinity, we cultivate the gold-standard for Massachusetts cannabis.

## Affinity Locations

### West Springfield Location

Address: 175 Circuit Ave, West Springfield, MA 01089

Telephone: (413) 217-1155

### Boston Location

Address: 591 Albany Street, Boston, MA 02118

Telephone: (617) 206-2155



Email: [info@affinityne.com](mailto:info@affinityne.com) / See [www.affinityne.com](http://www.affinityne.com) for hours

**What to bring:** Medical Use of Marijuana Program Patient ID card and a government-issued ID.

**First time visitors:** Affinity offers one-on-one patient consultations. After checking in at the front desk, let an associate know if you'd like to talk about your options for consultation.

**Accessibility:** All of our medical marijuana dispensaries are ADA accessible.

**Translation & Interpretation Services:** If one of our staff members doesn't speak your language, we will utilize a telephone translation service or a hand-held translator device to ensure effective

communication. We also provide accommodations for the blind/visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing.

### **Compassionate Care Programs:**

**Financial Hardship Program:** Affinity will offer a financial hardship discount to any registered patient with verification that he/she is a recipient of MassHealth, SSI benefits, or whose income does not exceed 300% of the federal poverty level, adjusted for family size. Please speak with a staff member at Affinity for more information or to apply.

**Military Veterans:** Affinity is also pleased to offer discounts on all cannabis products to honor Veterans for their service. To enroll, patients will need to show their active Military ID, DD-214 form, or a DD-7265 form.

In addition, Affinity offers a number of special promotions. Please visit our website ([www.affinityne.com](http://www.affinityne.com)) to sign up for our communications or speak with a staff member at Affinity to find out more.

## **Cannabis 101: Answering the basics**

### ***What is the difference between THC and CBD?***

CBD and THC are the most commonly known compounds within the cannabis plant, and they are found in the crystals that cover the flower.

CBD and THC are two chemical messengers that imitate our own body's cannabinoids, directly and indirectly attaching to receptors that are responsible for regulating pain, sleep, digestion, mood, inflammation, and immune function. Receptors are sensory nerves that receive and transmit signals within the body from chemical messengers (like CBD and THC).

CBD is considered non-euphoric and non-intoxicating.

In fact, CBD can minimize the intoxication and sedation of THC while increasing the effectiveness of the relief of pain, nausea, vomiting, and anti-cancer effects.

In addition, CBD may provide relief from Alzheimer's, traumatic brain injury, diabetes, autism, epilepsy, Crohn's, PTSD, and acne.

THC is the cannabinoid that gives a euphoric sensation. THC may be helpful to relieve pain, muscle spasms, pressure in the eye, induce sleep, stimulate appetite, and reduce nausea.

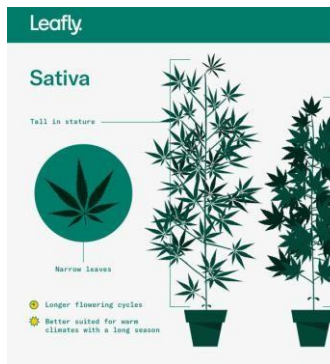
THC may also provide therapeutic benefits for arthritis, migraines, Alzheimer's, Crohn's, glaucoma, PTSD, MS, and sleep apnea.

CBD and THC and all of the plant's compounds are most effective when working together. Look for "full spectrum" or "whole plant" for optimal therapeutic effects.

CBD and THC are two specific cannabinoids found in the cannabis flower that have different effects on our body. Each has the potential to help with a wide range of illnesses.

### ***What is the difference between Indica, Sativa, and Hybrid?***

Indica, Sativa, and Hybrid are broad categories used to differentiate varieties of the cannabis plant. Think about it like apples, there are a few distinctly recognizable colors: red, green, and yellow. Like different colored apples, the main varieties of cannabis grow in specific ways, those differences provide information like the region of origin. Just as there are thousands of varieties of apples, there are thousands of *strains* of cannabis.



Though many attach a “body high” with Indica strains and a “head high” with Sativa strains, most strains available for purchase are actually a hybrid of the two. Very few “pure” Sativa or Indica strains exist

\*Source *Sativa vs Indica Illustration-1*. 2018. Leafly, <https://www.leafly.com/news/cannabis-101/sativa-indica-and-hybrid-differences-between-cannabis-types>.

### ***Why is there variance in how cannabis strains affect different people?***

The effects of those *strains* are determined by two main things: the plant and the patient. Each *strain* has a unique chemical makeup of *terpenes* and *cannabinoids*. A patient’s “taste palate” or *endocannabinoid system* determines how that patient’s body will interact with the plant. Sometimes, the same species of apple tastes different between people because of their unique taste palate. Just like apples, it takes some experimentation to know what strains are best for a patient’s needs.

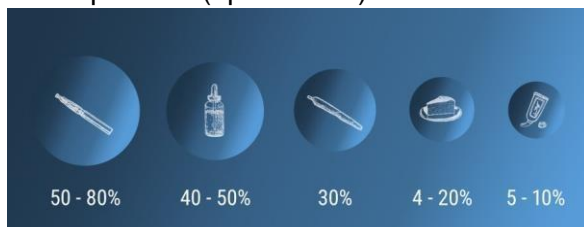
Affinity associates can help patients select which *strains* might be best suited for their needs.

Cannabis often enhances what a patient is already feeling. Affinity recommends that new patients consume in familiar and comfortable environments. For patients feeling nervous about using an unfamiliar product, ask a trusted friend or family member for company during the duration of effects.

### ***How does cannabis work with my body?***

People have receptors all over their bodies primed to interact with cannabis. When consuming cannabis, *cannabinoids* from the plant bind with the receptors all over the body which make up a person’s *endocannabinoid system (ECS)*.

The reason a patient’s body processes edible MIPs (Marijuana Infused Products) differently than inhaled flower is due to varying levels of *bioavailability*. The “intensity” of a high is influenced by the *bioavailability* of a product, the concentration of *cannabinoids* (i.e. % of THC), and how much work it takes to process (uptake rate).



The ECS helps regulate many physiological processes such as movement, mood, memory, appetite, and pain. Each person’s system is unique. Some may over or under express a receptor, making one more or less sensitive to the effects of *cannabinoids*.

Image. *Bioavailability CBD*. 2019. Royal Queen Seeds Cannabis Blog, <https://www.royalqueenseeds.com/blog-bioavailability-the-story-of-how-cannabis-enters-thebody-n943>/img/cms/Inner-Gras.jpg

## What's the right product for me?

Affinity offers an expansive menu with a variety of products all with differing effects. Variance in experience depends on a number of factors: quantity consumed, method of consumption, tolerance level, and an individual's unique biological responses. Creating the best experience requires intention and controlled experimentation.

Each *strain* has a unique makeup of terpenes and cannabinoids providing various benefits. There are 20,000 known *terpenes* present in various plant and animal species on earth and there are over 100 known cannabinoids in the cannabis plant. Here we have a few of the most commonly occurring *terpenes* and *cannabinoids* found in the cannabis plant.




Types of product offered:

**THC dominant:** THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) is the most prevalent compound in the cannabis plant, known for its psychoactive effects.

**CBD dominant:** CBD (cannabidiol) is the second most prevalent compound in the cannabis plant, known for its therapeutic effects. Clinical studies have focused on CBD's effect on anxiety, cognition, movement disorders, and pain. CBD has been known to have anti-inflammatory properties, provide pain relief, help with sleep, and lower the frequency of seizures.

**THC:CBD ratio products:** Affinity offers products with varying ratios of THC:CBD. This is because the two cannabinoids work together in the body creating their own unique effect, often combining to create a less psychoactive experience.



					
	<b>Limonene</b>	<b>Alpha-Pinene Beta-Pinene</b>	<b>Myrcene</b>	<b>Caryophyllene</b>	<b>Linalool</b>
Aroma	Citrus, Lemon	Pine	Musky, Earthy	Wood, Spice	Floral, Sweet
Typical Effects	Stress Relief, Elevated Mood	Creativity, Alertness, Euphoria	Sedation, Body High, Relaxation	no noted significant effects	Calming, Sedation
Medicinal Benefits*	Anti-Anxiety, Antidepressant, Gastroprotective, Anti-Fungal	Asthma, Inflammation, Antiseptic	Antioxidant, Insomnia, Pain, Muscle Tension, Anti-Carcinogenic	Chronic Pain, Insomnia, Joint Pain	Anti-Anxiety, Antidepressant, Anti-Convulsant
Affinity Strains	[tbd]	[tbd]	[tbd]	[tbd]	[tbd]
Also found in	Citrus, Peppermint	Pine, Dill, Parsley, Basil, Rosemary	Hops, Mango, Thyme, Lemongrass	Black Pepper, Clove, Cotton	Lavender, Rosewood

\*reported benefits, not to be used as medical advice

Glossary of all *italicized* terms as they relate to cannabis:

**Bioavailability:** The degree to which a cannabinoid becomes available for the body to process.

**Cannabinoid:** Concentrated in the trichomes of the cannabis flower, cannabinoids provide a variety of therapeutic effects.

**Decarboxylation:** The process of activating cannabinoids with heat to convert them into a form that the body can process. For example: in the plant's raw form the cannabinoid THCA is abundant, but if consumed before decarboxylation, the body

There are many names for the cannabis plant. Affinity defaults to using cannabis, the scientific term for the plant, unless referring to state or federal regulations that specifically use the term marijuana.

could not process it. When activated by heat, THCA converts into THC, which can then bind to receptors in the body.

**Endocannabinoid system (ECS):** The ECS, initially an evolutionary development meant to maintain equilibrium and homeostasis in the body is made up of neurotransmitters and cannabinoid receptors. With receptors across the human body, the ECS can interact with cannabinoids naturally produced in the human body (endocannabinoids), cannabinoids derived from the cannabis plant like THC and CBD (phytocannabinoids), and cannabinoids produced in lab settings (synthetic cannabinoids).

**Terpene:** Also known as terpenoids, these compounds determine a strain's smell, flavor, and additional therapeutic effects.

**Strain:** the colloquial name for a specific "type" of cannabis within the Indica, Sativa, and hybrid categories. The scientific name for a strain is cultivar.

### **Methods of consumption**

Organized by "method", including estimated onset time, estimated duration, Affinity offerings, new user recommendations (how to consume), and things to note

<b>Method</b>	<b>Onset of effects and duration</b>	<b>How to Consume</b>	<b>Tips and tricks</b>	<b>Offerings</b>
Inhalation: Smoking flower and vaporizing cartridges	10 - 15 min ~ 1 - 1.5 hours	Start by inhaling a small puff of product, similar to taking a small sip out of a straw. Then breathe in some air, mixing the air and product as you inhale both into your lungs.	Even though the method of consumption is the same, many report smoking flower feels different, often stronger, than vaping product from a cartridge.	e.g. flower, pre-roll, vapes, etc.
Inhalation: vaporizing concentrated products (dabbing)	5 - 10 min ~ 1.5 - 3 hours	Heat up your vaporizer or dabbing tool to the appropriate temperature (either with an electric vaporizer or a high intensity flame).	Concentrated products are more than 2 – 3x stronger than inhalation and are not recommended for new users.	e.g. wax, shatter, etc.
Edible: Sublingual uptake	5 - 20 min 1.5 - 2.5 hours	For first time users, Affinity recommends a single (5mg or less) dose. Start low and go slow.	Sublingual products differ from other edibles because cannabinoids enter the bloodstream through salivary glands as opposed to through the liver.	e.g. tinctures

Edible: Digestive uptake	45 min – 2 hours ~2 - 6 hours	For first time users, Affinity recommends a single (mg or less) dose and waiting a minimum of 2 hours. Start low and go slow. Edibles with an uptake intended for the stomach and digestive tracts take longer to process than almost any other method of consumption.	Having your digestive system already working can help with uptake and onset rates. Consider eating a small amount 30-45 min before consuming your product to prime your digestive system prior to consumption.	e.g. gummies, chocolates, pills, capsules
Topical application: Transdermal uptake	10 - 15 min  Varies across products, some are meant to last longer, and some are more concentrated	Apply to area allowing all product to sink into the skin. For salves, this might mean warming up the product between your fingers applying product in layers.	Transdermal products will penetrate the 7 layers of skin and enter the bloodstream while topical products remain on the surface of the skin.	e.g. lotions, creams, salves, bath bombs

Always start with the lowest dose when consuming a new product and allow yourself the full recommended time to feel the effects before raising your dosage.

### **Tracking your experiences with Affinity products**

It takes controlled experimentation to learn what product, dosage, and method of consumption works best for a patient's needs. Affinity recommends keeping track of this information. If possible, try to record this information shortly after or during your experience to capture enough details. With this information our associates can better assist in finding the best products for you!

Date and Time: When did you consume your cannabis? Morning, midday, or evening?

Product and Type: What was it? An edible, flower, or topical? Include details like strain or the ratio of THC:CBD.

Method of Consumption: How did you take it? Smoking flower, vaping, digesting an edible, topical application?

Dosage: If smoking or vaping, record approximately how many puffs inhaled, or number grams of flower consumed. If consuming an edible, write down the number of servings or mg. \*note: max serving size for an edible in MA is 5mg

Onset and Duration: How long did it take to feel effects? How long did they last?

\*Pro tip! Topicals can be difficult to judge in effectiveness, because the effects are felt so gradually. To feel how effective a topical is, try applying it to just one side of your body. This will help you determine how much is an effective dosage for you!

Psychological Effect: Did you feel or act differently than you normally do? Did a specific emotion stand out? Some common psychological effects include: a change in the intensity one feels emotions, an increased or decreased ability to focus, a change in stress levels.

Physical Effect: Did your body feel any different? How did cannabis interact with your physical symptoms? Some common physical effects include: relaxation, pain relief, dry mouth, gain or loss of appetite, slowed or quickened heart rate.

## Safety, Warnings and Substance Abuse Resources

Massachusetts law prohibits the use of cannabis and MIPs in public. Be sure to open and consume packaged products on private property.

**Overconsumption:** If you are concerned that you have overconsumed, seek a family member or friend you can talk to. Anxiety and paranoia may accompany accidental over-ingestion or overconsumption. In this event, it is best to stay calm and remain in a comfortable, safe place. With time, these unwanted effects will pass.

**Driving:** Driving under the influence of cannabis/marijuana is prohibited under M.G.L. c.90 s.24. Patients should never drive or operate machinery after consuming medicated products. Affinity recommends traveling with any marijuana locked securely in your vehicle's trunk and out of reach. Up to 10oz is permitted inside the state of MA, as long as you are traveling with your medical card.

**Crossing state lines/federally illegal:** While possession of cannabis is legal within Massachusetts, it is still federally illegal. Therefore, it is illegal to cross state lines with medicated product, even between two states where medical marijuana or adult use cannabis is legal. Furthermore, it is illegal to consume medicated product on federal lands, even lands located within states where medical marijuana or adult use cannabis is legal.

**Resale/Redistribution:** Affinity products may not be resold after purchase. For more information regarding penalties for possession or distribution of cannabis in violation of Massachusetts law, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-law-about-marijuana>.

**Prescription Medications:** Cannabis can interact with some prescription medications. It is important to consult with your physician regarding any prescriptions you are taking and their potential interactions with cannabis.

**Pregnancy:** There may be additional health risks with consuming cannabis if you are pregnant, planning on becoming pregnant, or breastfeeding.

**Substance abuse:** If you find cannabis use is interfering with your life you may wish to seek help. Help is available online through the [Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-substance-use-helpline) at 800.327.5050.

**Signs and Symptoms of substance abuse:** Each drug has different physical effects; however, the symptoms of addiction are similar. If you notice the following, consider talking to a trained resource:

- Neglecting responsibilities at school, work, or home because of drug use
- Abandoning enjoyed activities
- Spending excessive time in acquisition, using, or recovering from use
- Use in situations in which it is physically hazardous
- Use to avoid or relieve withdrawal symptoms. Symptoms may include nausea, sweating, shakiness, and extreme anxiety.

**Source:** <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/media-guide/science-drug-use-addiction-basics>

**Safe Storage:** All cannabis and marijuana infused products should be kept away from minors and pets. To avoid accidental consumption by minors or pets never store MIPs with other household foods. In addition, keep all cannabis and MIP's in the child-proof packaging provided at the time of purchase. Affinity recommends lock and key storage of all cannabis and MIPs.

**Cannot provide medical advice/FDA:** Affinity does not give medical advice. The information provided on the potential beneficial effects of cannabis is not meant to be taken as a treatment plan. Cannabis has not been analyzed or approved by the FDA. There is limited information on all side-effects associated



with the medicinal use of cannabis, and there may be health risks associated with using cannabis. Seek the advice of a licensed physician or qualified health provider before consuming.

### **Additional Resources**

Americans for Safe Access (ASA) A compilation of over 200 research based scholarly articles on the potential therapeutic effects and versatility of medical cannabis.

[https://www.safeaccessnow.org/medical\\_cannabis\\_research\\_what\\_does\\_the\\_evidence\\_say](https://www.safeaccessnow.org/medical_cannabis_research_what_does_the_evidence_say)

Marijuana Policy Project (MPP) An advocacy group in support of reforming cannabis laws. Includes information such as research overviews, effective arguments, and federal policies.

<https://www.mpp.org/issues/medical-marijuana/>

National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) An advocacy organization supporting the reform of marijuana laws. Their site includes a compilation of the recent research supporting medical marijuana use for a variety of identified conditions. <http://norml.org/library/recent-research-onmedical-marijuana>

There's a lot of information about cannabis! We've tried to keep things short and to the point, focusing just on what is needed to get started.
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For more information on strains, cannabinoids, terpenes, the endocannabinoid system, and the science of cannabis, ask a sales associate or visit our website.

Date and Time

Product and Strain

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Method of Consumption

Dosage

Onset

Duration

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Notable Psychological Effects:

Notable Physical Effects:

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Did you like this? Would you try it again?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

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