

Weed It and Reap!

Because of the unregulated nature of the CBD industry, the market has become flooded with low quality, inexpensive and possibly unsafe CBD products. This has made it difficult to know where to buy CBD, and what to look for when choosing the right product for you. It is critical for consumers to purchase from reputable sources and support responsible CBD companies — namely, those that are transparent about production and business practices and committed to providing safe and science-based CBD to their customers.

What to Know:

Before purchasing any CBD product, it is important to do your research and understand how to recognize a safe, high-quality product. Knowledgeable staff, accurate and accessible third-party test results and quality customer service can all be signs of a credible option, but another factor to keep in mind when purchasing CBD is the presence of other cannabinoids.

Many CBD retailers offer full-spectrum CBD products (made with hemp extract) and/or THC-Free CBD products (made with CBD isolate). In order to maximize the benefits of quality CBD, opt for a full-spectrum product, which usually contains trace amounts of THC (<0.3%, in accordance with the 2018 Farm Bill). This small amount of THC allows for all the cannabinoids to work better together through a phenomenon called the “entourage effect,” which helps to bring out more of the benefits from your CBD. Remember, CBD is non-psychoactive, so the presence of THC does not mean you will feel the “high” experienced by THC users.

It can be helpful to think of buying hemp and CBD like any other agricultural product. If you prioritize purchasing local and organic food, for example, consider sourcing your CBD from a USDA-Certified Organic farm or a locally owned small business.

Where To Buy:

CBD Stores

CBD stores come in many forms and they can be hit or miss in terms of quality. It all depends on the knowledge of the individual owner. Ask a lot of questions, test their knowledge and always ask to see the certificate of analysis (COA). If someone at the store can answer your questions and provide you with the test results, then that is a store you can trust will carry a quality product. Be especially mindful of stores that carry only one brand of CBD, and be sure to inquire as to how it was produced and tested.

Online

Online shopping allows you to compare products from multiple companies, research products thoroughly and ask questions directly of producers and retailers. This is a good option, especially for beginners; however, even online shopping for CBD could steer you in the wrong direction. It is important to know what you are looking for and to shop around.

Gas Stations/Convenience Stores

CBD products tend to be poor quality at these locations, hence the lower price point. This is definitely a red flag! Some unscrupulous companies may take advantage of the lack of strict regulations by cutting corners to keep the price low, which sacrifices safety and quality on the consumer end (think heavy metals and pesticides). Always use caution and don't fall for flashy packaging, but it's probably best to avoid buying CBD at gas stations altogether.

Specialty Stores — Shopping Local

Local “mom and pop” type stores, smoke shops and natural grocers are typically a good place to check out, especially if you are interested in CBD produced locally. When approaching these stores, feel free to ask questions, and always ask to see the COA.

Farmers Markets

Farmers markets can be a great place to find high-quality, locally produced CBD. Not only are farmers usually committed to quality and transparency, but you also know that your dollars are going to support a small local business directly. One of the benefits of buying directly from the producer is that they are always excited to meet you and answer all your questions. Farmers and staff are knowledgeable and passionate about what they do, which helps them develop trust with their customers.