

Living Positive Resource Centre, Okanagan

## COMMUNITY ACTION ON AIDS

By Karen Alexander

**"When I hear somebody sigh, 'Life is hard', I am always tempted to ask, 'Compared to what?'"**

**-Sydney J Harris**

**"There is nothing the body suffers that the soul may not profit by"**

**-George Meredith**

As the world gathers in Toronto in August for the International AIDS Conference, there is something YOU can do to raise awareness of the AIDS pandemic. The Community Action on AIDS Project is preparing for a powerful public art installation in Kelowna, which will feature 8,000 memorial flags (to represent the 8,000 lives lost each day to AIDS) in the shape of a giant AIDS ribbon. If you would like to design a flag of your own, please come into the office *before August 9<sup>th</sup>* and we'll be happy to provide the materials for you to do so. It is very simple to do, and is a wonderful way to



commemorate the life of a loved one and show that you care about those living with HIV/AIDS. For more details please call Karen at 862-2437.

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### Topher Talks!

Well the heat of summer is upon us, and those not fortunate enough to have air-conditioning are probably finding it hard to sleep at night. Two years ago I broke down and purchased a small window air-conditioner for my bedroom. My challenge was the fact that I live in an old house with strange windows. I needed to find a conditioner that actually fit in my window. After two attempts with measurements on a box being different from what they were in reality, I finally found a unit that I can force into my window. Now I can comfortably sleep at night, and if the house is closed up tight I

can drop the house temperature down a bit. But I do have two dogs that run in and out regularly which sort of defeats the purpose. (They have me well trained)

For the rest of the day, I have found with volunteering at LPRC, I can spend several hours in a cool environment, which makes part of the day bearable. Other popular places for a cool respite are mall's, and movie theaters. Mind you the cost of a movie these days might not be worth a few hours of coolness. Heading to the beach is also an option, but if the wind is not blowing a bit, it probably is not that cool down there.

## Health Canada Says: Don't Drink the Water!

OTTAWA (June 30, 2006) - Health Canada is informing air travelers with compromised immune systems that they should avoid drinking any tap water on aircraft, including tea or coffee from the galley, or using water from the lavatory faucets for brushing teeth.

There is always a possibility that bacteria can enter the aircraft water system from time to time from a variety of sources. As part of its random inspections of aircraft water, Health Canada found Total Coliform bacteria, which usually indicates water is of poor quality or stale and that the water system should be sanitized. Total Coliform is normally not harmful to human health, however, if E. Coli, a type of coliform bacteria, is present, this can be harmful to human health.

Whenever Health Canada finds bacteria in airline water, it notifies the airline of the problem and directs that corrective action be taken, including posting warnings in the lavatories and galleys, providing bottled water to passengers and staff, and shutting

down the water system. The system must be sanitized within 24 hours for E. Coli and 48 hours for Total Coliform. Water systems must then be re-tested.

Recent random testing of water on aircraft showed 15.1% of aircraft tested positive for Total Coliform bacteria, and 1.2% tested positive for E. Coli bacteria. Most contamination was found in water from lavatory faucets.

The airlines have been provided with their results and satisfactory remedial action was taken in all instances where deficiencies were found. If you are planning to travel by air and have specific questions regarding the water quality and safety, please contact your airline or your health-care provider directly.

Health Canada will continue to work with the airline industry on the goal of safeguarding public health.

### Public Inquiries:

1-866-225-0709

## Knowledge is Power — Live Free!

*By Sheila Kerr*

At the Living Positive Resource Centre, we believe that youth should be free to make informed and educated choices in regards to who they are, who their friends are, and what they will or will not tolerate when it comes to drugs and alcohol, discrimination, sexuality and other subjects that have a profound influence on the way they live their lives. We also believe that youth should have access to all available resources in their community that can provide information to help them make the choices that are right for them. It is for these reasons that we designed the "Live Free" campaign.

"Live Free" is all about giving youth the knowledge they need to make their own informed and educated choices. It is about living free from abuse, addiction, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and other STI's, from discrimination, depression, and negative body image. It is also about knowing who you can turn to for help, and about learning to reach out and access information, resources and assistance from safe and knowledgeable sources.

In order to make sure youth have easy access to all this information, we have developed a website — [www.livefreebc.ca](http://www.livefreebc.ca) - full of links to informative, youth-friendly websites, and resources within the Central Okanagan that youth can access for help and information.

The "Live Free" campaign was kicked off in Kerry Park in Kelowna on Saturday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, after two years in the making. There to help us celebrate were local Okanagan bands Zen Media (funk), 7<sup>th</sup> Generation (hip-hop), and Sleddogs (rock). The park was alive with music and dancing, free give-aways, and of course, our Live Free Ambassadors - manning the information booth, handing out free merchandise to the crowd, and announcing contest questions for some sweet prizes!



And the fun didn't stop there! Our Live Free Ambassadors were kept busy during the weekend of Wakefest, providing information and handing out 8,000 condoms to youth enjoying the sun, the water, the view, and everything else Wakefest had to offer.

Our "Live Free" campaign will be in full bloom all summer long, and will branch into other projects throughout the rest of the year, as well. So if you happen to see a few young men and ladies sporting the "Live Free" T-shirt at any events in the Central Okanagan, feel free to say 'hi',

**My Trials and Tribulations with the Female Condom**

*-Anonymous*

So, I was sitting in on an office meeting where the topic at hand was condoms. I have been around the block with the typical condom, so there was nothing new, until there was talk of the “female condom”. I did not know there was such a thing, and so voiced my curiosity. Sheila, our Prevention Coordinator, promptly whisked me off to her office of naughty treasures and pulled out a female condom.

She proceeded to tell me how it is inserted and used. I just looked at it strangely. There are two rather large rings on either end, one of which is supposed to be shoved inside of me. Right. I have to admit, I thought it was pretty rad when I found out that it could be inserted up to eight hours before sex and that it could also be used as protection during oral sex. Aside from that, I thought it was pretty dumb that you have this huge ring sticking out of your vagina; wouldn't that be uncomfortable? Sheila assured me it was not and that I'd get used to it, as the condom itself, when inside, feels just like a

second skin.

Then came my adventures of inserting the condom. Sheila gave me the instruction pamphlet that came with the condoms, *just in case*. Regular condoms are pretty straight forward - you pinch the tip and roll it on an erect penis. Easy enough. So here is the female condom that requires rubbing, shoving, and adjusting.

I opened up the instruction booklet and tried to figure it out. Rub the condom to make sure the lubricant is evenly distributed, use your middle finger and thumb to pinch the inner ring, insert up into the vagina. It sounded simple, but the condom kept slipping. When I finally managed to get the ring in, it was not in far enough so I have to shove it in higher. After my adjusting and making sure the condom ring was not “twisted” inside, I was left with a polyurethane tube piece and a ring dangling between my legs.

I hoped it would get better when I got dressed again, but it felt awkward and like it was going to slip out. My next thought was: is the inside of the still lubricated because of my adjusting? I ran myself down to the drugstore to buy some

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**Sheila Kerr, Editor**

This newsletter is the official publication of the Living Positive Resource Centre, Okanagan. It is published four to six times a year. The materials in this newsletter are meant to be consistent with LPRC purposes which are: a) to promote awareness of HIV/AIDS, b) to develop and provide educational resources, c) to support those infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Even so, the opinions and comments within this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect LPRC policy. The newsletter does not endorse the use of any particular treatment or therapy. The Board, staff and volunteers of LPRC do not accept the risk of, nor responsibility for any damages, costs or consequences of any kind which may arise or result from the use of information featured in this newsletter. Persons using the information provided through this newsletter do so by their own decision and hold the society's board, staff and volunteers harmless. Submissions for publication may be sent to our office at any time; publication deadline is three weeks prior to publication date. Submissions will be returned if a request is made in writing and an address is provided. Reprinting and distributing this newsletter is openly encouraged.

**LPRC's Board of Directors**

- Beryl Itani
- Dr. John Kennedy
- John Langston
- Buffy Mills
- Dr. Gary Randhawa
- Josephine Stebbings
- Daryle Roberts, Executive Director

**Living Positive Membership**

For a small fee, you can support Living Positive Resource Centre, Okanagan by becoming a member. Membership entitles you to vote on issues that affect the agency, and the fee helps cover the cost of this newsletter. Please take the time to fill out this membership application and drop it off at our office or mail it to:

**Living Positive, 101-266 Lawrence Ave,  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 6L3**



**Living Positive Membership Application**

Members must agree to uphold the aims of the Society and maintain confidentiality.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

(Check here  to receive Positive Okanagan by e-mail only)

Fee :  \$12 (individual);  \$25 (organization);  \$100 (lifetime);  Free (client)

Make cheques payable to **Living Positive Resource Centre**

LPRC's office is located at:

**101—266 Lawrence Ave,  
Kelowna BC V1Y 6L3**

Phone: (250) **862-AIDS** (2437)

**1-800-616-AIDS** (2437)

Fax: (250) 868-8662

Website:

**www.livingpositive.ca**

## RICHARD'S RANT

### The Clare Show

By Richard Babcock

Faster than a speeding bullet,  
Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound,  
Smile so bright it'll melt your heart,  
Remarkable as a client advocate!

I kept going to the dentist to have one tooth at a time pulled, to the point where I was down to 19 teeth—and those were rotten as well. I had no molars.

This "Super Woman" is Clare!

I've had some negative experiences with workers in the past, I prefer intelligence, competence, a get-the-job-done sort of person. Clare has inspired me—the way she handles social services.

Here is my motto: Fight until your last breath. Don't allow anyone to push you around.

Although, as sick people, we can only go so far (I'd go to the end), Clare goes the distance. She is one of the best advocates I've ever seen.

If you need help and you are HIV+ (or HCV+), you couldn't do any better than to have Clare on your side.

I was sitting here with 19 rotten teeth, and between the LPRC and Clare, they really came through for me. The LPRC helped out financially and Clare got the rest, to what percentage I couldn't tell you. But yet again, the LPRC comes through with flying colours.

I'm learning that some people, along with the LPRC, bring God to where He's supposed to be, and put Him together with those who need Him.

All I can say is Thank God for Clare. Hopefully I can give hope to others as I tell my story.

Thanks Clare,

-Your friend, Richard.

## Meet our AIDS Walk Coordinator!

Hello all, my name is Erin Scott and I am the new AIDS Walk Coordinator for 2006. This job has been a great experience, and there is still more to come as I will be here until the end of summer. I am a student studying Anthropology at the University of Victoria, with minors in both Greek and Roman Studies (Classics) and History. I plan to enroll in the University of Victoria's Education Department to train to become a Secondary School Teacher, teaching Social Studies and Earth Sciences. I have been an active community member since I came to the Okanagan in 1992. When I won a service award in 1996 in my school, I knew that I wanted to continue to help in my community. I became a Candy-Striper in 1998 at Three Links Manor and continued there until 2000. I then Candy-Striped for another two

years at Kelowna General Hospital. In 2001, I was a coordinator for one of Kelowna's largest parades in the city's history. That project has helped immensely with my current job as AIDS Walk Coordinator because it taught me skills needed to plan a walk of this scale.

I encourage all of you to come and join the Living Positive Resource Center at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Okanagan Family AIDS Walk on Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>. We're still looking for some volunteers, so email me at [escott@lprc.ca](mailto:escott@lprc.ca) if you're interested!



## Sync

Drawing the curtains open ,  
I see the horizon in the distance,  
like a pyre on which love burns  
hope, they said, moved mountains,  
in HIV we celebrate the beginning of a new jour-  
ney,  
where we can choose to open the curtains,  
or draw it closed,  
where we can find peace with ourselves,  
or still clutch at yet another mirage,  
where we can plan the future ,  
or just live in the present like we were meant to.

ron



**What's Hot?**

- Smooth 38%
- Trimmed 30%
- Hairy 26%
- Shaven 6%

Want to know more?  
Latest report now available  
*Sex Now: Numbers Rising*

Do the 2006 survey on-line!  
Visit!  
[www.sexnowsurvey.com](http://www.sexnowsurvey.com)

Thank you    
Community-Based  
Research Centre

## CLIENTS' NOTICE BOARD

### NATUROPATHIC HEALTH CARE



Dr. Janice Potter, a Naturo-  
pathic Physician, offers her ser-  
vices free to our clients. Call  
862-2437 for your referral.

### MASSAGE THERAPY

Free half-hour sessions Thurs-  
day afternoons (1:30-4:00  
p.m.) with Kristi Maguire,  
Registered Massage  
Therapist .



### CLIENT SUPPORT

#### Kelowna

To meet with a client support  
worker, call 862-2437.

**South Okanagan & Simil-  
kameen:** call 1-800-616-2437  
to book an appointment.

#### Vernon & North Okanagan:

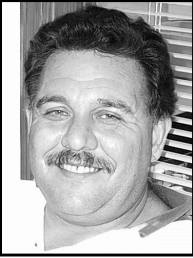
Call Theresa McDonald of  
North Okanagan Youth & Family  
Services Society at 545-3572.

### REIKI & HEALING TOUCH

Find balance and calm. Enjoy  
the relaxing benefits of a quiet  
hour with Toshie. Call 862-  
2437 to book your free Wednes-  
day session (10 a.m.-1 p.m.).

### CLIENT SERVICE HOURS

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



Brian Mairs

One of the pathogens (HIV/AIDS and hepatitis B & C), and where health professions face when we speak to groups where start. As purveyors of information we have a certain amount of knowledge about our subject that we would like to pass on, but if we assume that our audience knows very little we risk offending people, while if we assume their knowledge is very high we risk boring them to sleep. To answer this dilemma, we are undertaking a community readiness assessment of all Bands in the Okanagan Nation to find out what they think they know about blood-borne

to-peer basis after our contract has ended, so the community owns the process and owns the capability to keep their own Band aware of means and methods to prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. The Community Readiness Model was designed at Colorado State University (by Native professors) and been tested with over 5,000 questionnaires in Native communities (both on reserve and off reserve) throughout the USA and Canada and has shown very accurate results. We are looking forward to working with each of the Bands on this project. For more information, you can write to Brian at [bmairs@oaas.ca](mailto:bmairs@oaas.ca)



(250) 862-2481  
[www.oaas.ca](http://www.oaas.ca)



**DO YOU HAVE YOUR PIN YET?**

**“Dress Down for AIDS Day”** Friday, August 25th

YOU can participate in the 2nd Annual “Dress Down for AIDS Day” by purchasing this funky pin for only \$5, which entitles you to dress casually on August 25th. Supplies are limited so call Erin at 862-2437 or email her at [escott@lprc.ca](mailto:escott@lprc.ca) and order yours today! All funds raised go to the 2006 Okanagan Family AIDS Walk and stay right here in our community!

**“My Trials and Tribulations With the Female Condom” Cont’d from page 3**

lube just to make sure and called my boyfriend over quickly because I wanted to try it out.

My boyfriend came over, and then came the time to try out this new condom. I’m trying to be sexy, but when he takes one look at the thing between my legs, he’s immediately confused. I would be too, if I were him. The mood was slightly killed as we were laughing about it, and he was asking

what in the hell it was.

When we were done, I went to get it out, but “oh crap”...where did it go? It wasn’t on the bed, it wasn’t on him, it had been thrust inside of me. By the time I finally got it, I thought, “well this is a bust”. The condom was definitely not supposed to go up inside. Good thing I have a back-up method.

As you may have gathered, my ex-

perience with the female condom was not the best. I thought it felt awkward and looked inelegant. Also, with it going up inside during intercourse, I don’t think that it was very trustworthy. My boyfriend did not care for the female condom either, it was weird and a bit of a mood killer. I am going to stick with the many varieties of the male condom, but invite you to try for yourself!

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!!

By Karen Alexander

#### **Please help - we need you!**

We are currently recruiting volunteers for our Speakers' Bureau, our "Live Free" Ambassador program, and special events such as the Okanagan Family AIDS Walk. Full training is provided, the hours are flexible, and you get the satisfaction of knowing that you are truly making a difference in people's lives! For more information, please call Karen at 862-2437 or email at [volunteer@lprc.ca](mailto:volunteer@lprc.ca).

#### **HIV/HEP C TRAINING**

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer with LPRC? Perhaps you have a family member living with HIV or HEP C that you are providing support for, or maybe you are just an interested community member who wants to increase your knowledge and skills. We invite you to join us for our "Mini-Core" training sessions - join us on Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 AM-1:00 PM for HIV/AIDS 101 or Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 AM-1:00 PM for HEP C 101. There is no cost to attend training. If you are interested in attending please contact our Prevention Coordinator Sheila at 862-2437 or by email at [educator@lprc.ca](mailto:educator@lprc.ca).

#### **SPEAKERS' BUREAU TRAINING**

Do you enjoy public speaking? Want to help educate and inform others? Then consider joining our Speakers' Bureau and attend this informative training session. Training will be held on Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 AM-4:30 PM. This is a free training session. . If you are interested in attending please contact our Prevention Coordinator Sheila at 862-2437 or by email at [educator@lprc.ca](mailto:educator@lprc.ca).

### **Meet our new Prevention Coordinator!**

By Sheila Kerr

The years of volunteering have paid off!

My name is Sheila Kerr, and I have taken over Nikki Maier's position as Prevention Coordinator (formerly "Educator"). Perhaps some of you may have met me before, I was a member of the Speakers' Bureau for a number of years, and also served some time on Living Positive's board of directors.

Now my job is to prevent new instances of HIV / HCV infection in the Okanagan Valley. It's a job I take seriously - but I can't do it alone. I'd like to extend my gratitude to all the volunteers who have helped out with education and awareness events in the past, and invite anybody with interest in volunteering to contact myself or Karen to find out how you can help.

I am enjoying my job here at LPRC very much. The people here are amazing, the work is enjoyable and meaningful, and there's always a little room for fun.

As part of the Prevention Coordinator's duties, I am now also newsletter editor. If you wish to submit any stories (fact or fiction), poetry, artwork or random thoughts, feel free to send them to me at [educator@lprc.ca](mailto:educator@lprc.ca).

I look forward to hearing from you!



Sheila Kerr

Says:

"Wear a Condom!"

### Topher Talks Cont'd from page one

So that leaves stripping down as low as we can legally go, or want to expose the world to, and tough out the hot weather knowing that in a few short months we will be complaining because it is cold. As they have been saying on the news, in January we will pay good money to go south for 30+ temperatures.

On another note, the 10th Annual Okanagan AIDS Walk is rapidly approaching. All the money raised stays here in the Valley to help with the Emergency Relief fund for the agency's clients. We are always looking for volunteers and walkers for this event. If you don't think you can do the walk, or help as a volunteer, you are welcome to drop by the event and see the participation of our communities in the event. There is a great feeling to see the numbers of

people who come out to support the agency in one form or another. I personally have been here for nine out of the ten walks and have been amazed at the growth of participants and monies raised. It is also rewarding to see all the long time participants as well as the new people who come to offer their support and awareness. The Walk is as much about awareness as it is about raising money. The more people that know about this disease and what can be done to prevent it, the better off we will all be.

On a minor rant. Some time in the past while, the Staple's Easy Button has gone missing from the front desk. This was a personal item that was brought in for a break in the office seriousness. So it is a little disappointing that it would develop legs and walk.

## Cannabis as Therapy for People living with HIV/AIDS

### "Our Right, Our Choice"

*Taken from Canadian AIDS Society website, [www.cdnaids.ca](http://www.cdnaids.ca)*

*The Canadian AIDS Society is a national coalition of more than 125 community-based AIDS service organizations across Canada. They are dedicated to strengthening the response to HIV/AIDS across all sectors of society, and to enriching the lives of people and communities living with HIV/AIDS.*

**Currently, an estimated 14% to 37% of people living with HIV/AIDS use cannabis to help with some of their symptoms. You may be one of them.**

People living with HIV/AIDS report many reasons for using cannabis: to stimulate their appetite, to help with nausea and vomiting, to manage pain, to relax, to help with anxiety, to improve their mood, to help with depression, to help manage their weight, to help stick to their medication regimen, to help with sleep, and others. Cannabis is not for everyone. You need to determine whether or not it is right for you. Scientific research has been limited and slow to study the effects of cannabis on these symptoms. At this time, we know that cannabis is helpful with the stimulation of appetite, and re-

lieves nausea and vomiting. Relief of nausea may help you stick to your medication regimen. Some types of pain that don't respond well to other medications are sometimes relieved with cannabis. Many people report using cannabis to cope with depression, anxiety, stress and other psychological effects; however, there is not much research in this area.

**Cannabis is a controlled substance in Canada which means that it is illegal to possess it, cultivate it, traffic it, possess it for the purpose of trafficking, import it, and export it.**

**Health Canada has developed the *Marihuana Medical Access Regulations* to enable compassionate access to cannabis for medicinal purposes. You can obtain an Authorization to Possess cannabis legally for medicinal purposes. You can also obtain**

**a**

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License to Produce cannabis for yourself, or you can designate someone to grow cannabis for you and only you.

**Cannabis is a relatively safe plant. The toxicity of cannabis is so low that you would need to consume 682 kg (1500 pounds) of cannabis in 15 minutes to die of an overdose, and even that has never been proven. (Do not try this at home!)**

To put it in perspective, the lethal dose for salt is about 0.2 kg. There has never been a single death attributed to cannabis in the thousands of years it has been used by humans. This said, it is still possible to consume too much cannabis, in the sense that the experience can be unpleasant for some people.

### **Too much cannabis**

It is possible to consume too much when smoking or eating cannabis, NOT in the sense that it may kill you, but consuming too much cannabis can be unpleasant. Caution must be taken especially when eating food that contains cannabis. A person who has consumed too much cannabis may become dizzy, agitated, nervous, or paranoid. When this happens, the person should be kept calm and reassured that this too shall pass. The most intense feelings will last about an hour and the effects of the cannabis should wear off in about 4 or 5 hours. While they are not in physical danger, they may feel chilly. If so, keep them warm. Most people fall asleep quickly after consuming too much cannabis.

### **Things you should be aware of:**

#### **• HIV Meds:**

For those of you on protease inhibitors, you will be happy to know that studies completed to date have not found any harmful effects or interactions between protease inhibitors and the use of cannabis. Keep in mind that these studies were short-term. One study even showed an

improvement of the immune function. If your meds make you nauseous, one study showed that cannabis can help you better stick to your medication schedule. It is a good idea to inform your doctor of your use of cannabis for medicinal purposes so that they have the full information about your therapy. Doctors and pharmacists may also be able to provide you with the latest information about possible negative interactions with your medication.

#### **• Smoking:**

Most people smoke cannabis to get the desired effects. Of course, smoking cannabis has long-term effects on the lungs, similar to those of smoking tobacco: lung irritation, coughing and the production of phlegm. However, a link between smoking cannabis and chronic lung diseases or cancer has not been established. Cannabis smoke does not have the same effects as tobacco smoke and scientists are still trying to understand the different effects on the body.



#### **• Contamination of Cannabis:**

Some moulds, bacteria or other contaminants may grow on your cannabis, whether the plant is still growing, or has been harvested and stored. While some of these organisms are harmless, others may be very toxic and dangerous to your health. They can cause serious lung infections, cancers and other health issues. People get infected by breathing them in when smoking or by contact with the mouth. Even the burning of the cannabis when smoking does not kill the dangerous toxins. It is best not to take a chance. If your cannabis has darkened in colour, or if you see some white, grey, black, or even blue-green, sometimes fuzzy mould growing on your weed, throw it out, just like you would

mouldy food! You may also notice a stale or musty smell, and the cannabis may feel warm to the touch. **Note:** Trichomes are little white glands that grow all over the cannabis plant and contain the cannabinoids. These glands are NOT dangerous. They give the plant a frosty look. If you are not sure whether you are looking at trichomes or mould, please consult the internet, books, or speak with someone who could help you.

• **Dependence:**

While there is no physical dependence from cannabis use, some people do develop a psychological dependence to cannabis.

• **Withdrawal Symptoms:**

There are no significant withdrawal effects when cannabis use is stopped or decreased. Some people may experience sleeplessness, irritability, and loss of appetite. These symptoms usually disappear after a few days.

**Is cannabis right for you?**

If you have a history of psychiatric illness, especially schizophrenia, or if mental illness runs in your family, cannabis may trigger some of these tendencies. If you have high blood pressure or heart disease, cannabis may increase your risks as it does tend to

speed up the heart rate. If you are using **medications of any kind**, cannabis may interact with your medication. It is best to discuss your cannabis use with your health care practitioners or pharmacist, just to be sure. If you have a **history of struggling with substance use**, you may wish to seek counselling to help you integrate cannabis in your life in a healthy way.

**Useful Resources:**

- **Canadian AIDS Society:** <[www.cdnaids.ca/cannabis](http://www.cdnaids.ca/cannabis)>
- **Health Canada – Medical Use of Marihuana:** <[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/mma](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/mma)>
- **Medical Marijuana Information Resource Centre:** <[www.medicalmarijuanainformation.com](http://www.medicalmarijuanainformation.com)>
- **VICS Medical Cannabis Guide:** <[www.thevics.com/publications/vics/VICSMedsGuide2005.pdf](http://www.thevics.com/publications/vics/VICSMedsGuide2005.pdf)>
- **Canadians for Safe Access:** <[www.safeaccess.ca](http://www.safeaccess.ca)>
- **Cannabis Health Magazine:** <[www.cannabishealth.com](http://www.cannabishealth.com)>
- **Medical Cannabis Resource:** <[www.medicalmarihuana.ca](http://www.medicalmarihuana.ca)> or <[www.medicalcannabis.ca](http://www.medicalcannabis.ca)>

