



Jason's Story: Fighting IBD Symptoms with Cannabis

Jason is a 37 year old man who was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis at the age of 20.

He is currently using cannabis to manager His symptoms.

He has graciously agreed to share his personal health journey with ulcerative colitis and medical cannabis in the hopes that you all can learn from his experiences.

We had the opportunity to interview him. This is his story:

What motivated you to try cannabis for helping your GI Disorder? (your symptoms, other meds not working, was just curious? etc)

I had become dependent on steroids to stay in remission and had two operations to remove my colon and create the pelvic pouch. I was still having symptoms years after and decided to try cannabis, which some people I know with the disease tried.

Can you tell us about your experience with getting a prescription for cannabis? Did you go through your physician or a private clinic?

I went through a private clinic, but I also let my doctor know. I was very nervous about bringing it up to him, but he was supportive and helpful. Telling him was actually a great thing because it opened me up with being honest with doctors about it, which is important. For example, if I go to the ER I tell them I use cannabis because it affects how they sedate me, if they need to. Cannabis helps me through pain, so if I am prescribed a narcotic I often reject the prescription because cannabis is enough for me. Doctors are impressed and happy by this.

The clinic I went to was amazing! Very supportive, clean and the environment was professional in nature. What type and format of medical cannabis do you use, and how was that determined?

I smoke, sometimes I vape or use edibles. Smoking is most effective for me. I have tried oils, pills but not my preference, doesn't help as much. Smoking/vaping gives me almost instant relief. Other methods take a while to kick in and affect me differently.

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Were you worried about side effects? Now that you have been on it, have you experienced any negative side effects?

Yes, very worried. I hated it in high school and was worried about not being in control of my actions or it causing worse problems. I actually find now that I am older and more mature, I can control my actions and my intake without needing to get silly high.

Do you feel that it compromises your ability to function in work, driving, day to day life etc.

I don't drive with it. I consider it the same as alcohol and treat it as such. I keep it away from my work life and use cannabis when I am not at work, or doing work. Otherwise, I feel that since it can have an impairment factor, I use it away from doing things involving kids, work, driving, etc.

What advice would you give to someone who is considering cannabis? Did you experience any pitfalls along the way that you would want people to avoid?

It is worth trying it – I was always against it but I took a risk and it does work. When using it however, you must exercise responsibility and treat it like alcohol because there can be an impairment factor. Start with a small dose to see how it affects you, increase small and slowly. Good luck!

For more information on gastroparesis, cannabis, and other GI disorders, visit our website at CDHF.ca