

Dose of Education Series:
CANNABIS AND INTIMACY

February 20th at MITA

Presented by Baked Bros™ Director of Education Derek Espinoza



OVERVIEW OF INTIMACY:

The dictionary defines intimacy as familiarity, closeness, and friendship. It is also used to describe acts of physical affection. The exchange of information between two individuals is one of the first steps in developing an intimate relationship. When we share our dreams, desires, fears, traumas, and goals with someone we care for, we feel deeply connected. Intimate relationships develop a sense of interdependence rapidly and in meaningful ways. Each partner is responsive to the struggles and triumphs of their other half, showing genuine engagement in life outside the relationship. As the relationship grows, each individual life is intertwined to create a mutual framework of "we" instead of "I". Due to the intimate dynamics of the relationship, both mental and physical, acknowledged commitment allows all other aspects of intimacy to flourish.

CANNABIS AND INTIMACY:

Cannabis and intimacy have been connected for as far back as 700 A.D. by Hindus in India as a means of enabling worshippers to feel the divinity inside themselves and their partner.¹ In the modern world, we tend to look at things more objectively and less through a metaphysical lens. When we talk about cannabis and intimacy we tend to focus on arousal, pleasure, sensation, and connection. These categories can be great viewpoints into the relationship between what is felt by cannabis consumers and what is objectively true from a scientific perspective.

- 1. Arousal** Cannabis has been used as an aphrodisiac for centuries the world over. In recent years, research has gone back and forth on whether cannabis increases or decreases sexual frequency. A study published in 2017 by the Journal of Sexual Medicine found that cannabis consumers have approximately 20% more sex than those who do not use cannabis. These findings were independent of sex, race, age, education level, income, religion, health status, marital status, and whether or not they had kids.²
- 2. Pleasure** - Endocannabinoids play a crucial role in the pleasure we experience during and immediately after sex. Another 2017 study published in the Journal of Sexual Medicine, found orgasm significantly raised the levels of endocannabinoid 2-AG inside the body. By adding exogenous cannabinoids such as THC and CBD, we may be able to increase the pleasure felt during and immediately after sex.³
- 3. Sensation** - Sensation is where cannabis seems to be most effective at increasing intimacy. Cannabis has several positive effects in terms of the heightened sensory perception it produces. Romantic couples benefit from euphoria, relaxation, and reduced pain sensitivity. Physically, cannabis can increase vasodilation, heart rate, and respiration which increase performance and pleasure.

¹ Aldrich, 1977

² Sun & Eisenberg, 2017

³ Fuss et al., 2017

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4. Connection - Cannabis may have the ability to strengthen feelings of intimate connection between romantic partners due to its effects on the endocannabinoid system. According to a 2010 study published in the Journal of Neuroimmunomodulation, endocannabinoids binding to CB1 and CB2 receptors has been demonstrated to enhance oxytocin secretion, a hormone that is essential in the bonding between humans. Consuming exogenous cannabinoids that bind to the same receptors may confer similar benefits.⁵

Every once in a while, a new patient will lean in close and ask in a hushed tone, "Is cannabis good for sex?". I let them know it is and that sex in and of itself is medicine. Physical acts of affection and the sex it may lead to serves as a way of embodying intimacy between romantic partners. Below are a few tips to increase arousal, pleasure, sensation, and connection.

1. To increase arousal, it is best to consume cannabis at a time where the peak effects coincide with the initiation of physical affection. For inhalation, effects peak 30 minutes after ingestion whereas oral consumption can peak 2-4 hours after ingestion. Inhalation is great for spontaneity as it rapidly takes effect. Oral consumption, however, can lead to profound intimacy due to the gradual intensification of effects.¹
2. When feelings of arousal are high, the proceeding pleasure is dramatically improved. Low doses tend to be better for increasing sexual desire, enjoyment, and satisfaction. On the contrary, high doses can lead to lack of interest, erectile dysfunction, and inhibited orgasm. To avoid ruining you and your partners night, avoid overconsumption.⁶
3. Picking the right strain is essential to finding the right product to increase sensation. Strains high in Linalool and myrcene can decrease sensation due to their analgesic and anesthetic properties. Strains high in limonene and beta-caryophyllene, such as Super Sour Diesel, are a better alternative as they can reduce anxiety allowing you to be present and focus on sensation.⁷
4. The connection we feel during acts of physical affection is integral to the intimacy of the experience. Feelings of anxiety, paranoia, or mental fogginess can impair our ability to connect to our partner. CBD can help mitigate these effects and for this reason suggest using a product that has a 5:1 CBD to THC ratio or higher. Also using a strain high in pinene can reduce mental fogginess and anxiety. For that reason, Blue Dream may be favorable.⁷

- Derek Espinoza, Baked Bros Director of Education

⁴ Kumar, Chambers & Pertwee, 2008

⁵ De Laurentiis, Fernández Solari, Mohn, Zorrilla Zubilete & Rettori, 2010

⁶ Balon, 2017

⁷ Russo, 2011