

Cannabis Use Increases Need for Painkillers After Surgery, Says Study

Many people use cannabis for pain management, but a new study finds that people who used cannabis before surgery needed more anesthesia during surgery and experienced increased recovery pain.

There is some evidence that cannabis may be beneficial for chronic and nerve pain. However, early research suggests that this is not the case for acute pain such as for surgery of a broken leg...This study shows that it is important for patients to tell their physician anesthesiologist if they have used cannabis products prior to surgery to ensure they receive the best anesthesia and pain control possible, including the use of non-opioid alternatives..."

Dr. Ian Holmen, lead author and anesthesiology resident at the University of Colorado Hospital

Presented at the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the study examined the painkiller needs of people who had used cannabis in some form and those who had not after surgery for a broken leg. People who reported cannabis use were given 58% more opioids per day in the hospital and reported greater levels of pain on a scale of 1 to 10. During the surgery, cannabis users needed 12.4 more milliliters of anesthesia during surgery.

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