

If your choice is a drug with gnarly side effects or THC, your health care provider might reply like this-

4/03/2024 11:45AM

To: Karen
Olanzapine and me.

Dear Karen,

I am the clinical pharmacist covering for Dr. [REDACTED] who is out of the office, returning tomorrow on 4/4/24.

I am glad to hear that you are proactive with doing your research on your medications! I wish medications did not come with side effects... Every person responds very differently to different medications and doses, so you may or may not experience the listed side effects.

As cannabis is highly regulated on the federal level, and there is not a lot of existing research on its use, we are unable to recommend it in the healthcare setting. Cannabis is also associated with very serious known risks such as cognitive impairment and psychosis.

I hope that you can work with Dr. [REDACTED] to determine a medication that works right for you! I will be sure to forward your message to her to review upon her return.

Please take care,
Sincerely,
[REDACTED]
Clinical Pharmacist
[REDACTED] Psychiatry Department

I can't let this one go. Wouldn't have been long ago I would have been, at best, in the 'live and let live' camp about THC. In fact I was rumored to be one of 4 in my graduating class at UC Santa Cruz, 1978, who'd not done weed or drugs. Supposedly 3 others, I only knew of 2.

But my wife's symptoms, both from her Stage IV cancer and the nasty meds she takes for it? heavy duty nausea and pain are now a constant part of her life.

The 'lightweight' (relatively safe) drugs like Zofran make a small dent in the suffering. The heavy duty drugs carry nasty side effects including the potential to trigger issues that won't stop after discontinuing the drug. Some potentially life-shortening.

So yeah, out of desperation we tried THC and using strain-specific edibles we found a few that almost completely eliminated symptoms without making Karen Jacobowsky feeling high. Relaxed, yes, but not spaced out.

But with a serious health issue you really want to be on the same page as your healthcare team, so you work with them to get their best recommendations and you try to not keep secrets.

The takeaway from the reply above- If traditional pharma can take away your pain but at the expense of serious side effects, possibly even life-shortening, vs the possibility THC might readily relieve the symptoms? the response is going to be, take the nasty drugs and hope for the best, because THC isn't sanctioned for medical use at the Federal level.

The worst part about all this is that it erodes the trust between patient and caregiver. Cut-and-past cya responses to my wife's question border on mistreatment.

I'll add that, in phone calls my wife has had with various doctors, the attitude is a bit more accepting.

Note that we live in California, where THC is legal for both medical and recreational use.

Facebook post (Identical to what's above); conversation below-