Nobody Ever Died From A CBD Overdose

I will never forget the tremors, the sweats, the cramps and muscle aches, and worst of all, the nystagmus—all because I skipped a two-milligram dose of Ativan the night before. This was my worst experience with withdrawal. I will never forget the moment, laying on the couch and my eyes twitching rapidly behind my closed lids, and realizing that I was addicted to Ativan. I was first put on Ativan in 2015 during one of many hospital stays for a TBI. Leading up to that hospital stay, I had slept probably nine hours total the week before. I collapsed in the shower and was unresponsive for fourteen hours. Upon being discharged from the hospital, I was written a prescription for Ativan to prevent this from happening again. Two years later in 2017, I realized that I was addicted and needed to cold turkey. Once I was off the Ativan, I needed to find a solution for my insomnia. Melatonin was not strong enough and I needed a solution before I wound up back in the hospital. My mom and I saw an advertisement for CBD gummies outside a small shop that sold supplements and other agents which could promote better health. Anxious for a solution that would not lead to addiction and dependence, we walked in and purchased my first bottle of CBD gummies. My mom was very nervous when we bought these because she did not want me to interpret this as her approving of marijuana use. I assured her I knew the difference between smoking a blunt and taking a CBD gummy at night to help me sleep (the gummies do not contain THC). Since finding the CBD gummies, not only have they helped me manage my post-concussion syndrome, but they help my mom’s anxiety and my dad’s Tourette’s syndrome. And best of all, if I forget to take a gummy, I will not experience withdrawal.

CBD effects the endocannabinoid system (ECS) and consists of endocannabinoid neurotransmitters which bind to ECS receptors within the central nervous system. The two main receptors are CB1 and CB2. CB1 receptors are found in the central nervous system and regulate pain, appetite, mood, coordination, and other functions. CB2 receptors are found in the body, the peripheral nervous system, and affect the immune system, and primarily affect pain and inflammation. This explains why CBD gummies are so impactful for insomnia, headaches, anxiety, and Tourette’s amongst other conditions. CBD muscle rubs have also become a popular alternative for Icy Hot or Tiger Balm. As an athlete, I was super excited by this and have found the muscle rubs also to be extremely effective. The effectiveness of CBD muscle rubs can also be explained by the ECS’s role in the inflammatory response. In contrast, Ativan acts on GABA receptors in the brain to slow down the central nervous system, reducing excess agitation and excitement in the brain, and thus inducing a calming and relaxing effect. While it can be effective, Ativan depresses the central nervous system which can lead to serious health consequences including depressing the respiratory system which leads to death. The immediate risks for patients prescribed Ativan are steep. Addiction can often lead to an overdose, leading to death. For people taking CBD, using too much at once will only mean you have to spend money sooner for more of the supplement. This is because, unlike Ativan, CBD does not depress the central nervous system. Instead, it acts on ECS receptors within the nervous system by loosely binding to the endocannabinoid receptors and stimulating the body to produce more natural endocannabinoids.

In this age where the opioid epidemic is in every town across the country and infiltrating communities, Ativan is left out of the discussion. It is one of the most frequently prescribed drugs and the number Ativan-induced deaths has increased exponentially in the past twenty years. But the War on Drugs has placed a stigma on CBD due to it being derived from the cannabis plant. CBD is just one example of natural substances that are non-addictive and non-lethal methods of aiding in the management of many chronic medical conditions. CBD is also not psychoactive (like marijuana), which is somewhat ironic because many prescription medications, like Ativan, are abused for highs. Nobody gets high off of CBD and more importantly, nobody ever died from CBD.