

Cannabis products are becoming more widely discussed as potential treatments for various health conditions. However, when it comes to sourcing cannabis online, the NHS medical cannabis page issues a clear warning: be cautious. Buying cannabis products from unregulated online sources can be risky due to unknown product contents, lack of proper medical assessment, and the absence of essential follow-up care. In this article, we'll break down the NHS concerns, explain why medical history and monitoring matter, and help you understand how legitimate treatment pathways differ from simply clicking 'buy' on an online shop.

## Why Is the NHS Concerned About Cannabis Products Purchased Online?

The NHS warns patients that many cannabis products sold online come with **unknown product contents**. Unlike medicines dispensed through the NHS or a registered pharmacy, these products often lack:

- Clear labelling of active ingredients and dosage
- Safety testing for contaminants such as pesticides or heavy metals
- Regulatory approval ensuring consistent quality and safety

This creates a situation where patients might consume something with inaccurate THC or CBD levels, or even harmful substances, without realising the risks. Worse, these products are not prescribed after a thorough clinical assessment, which is essential when considering cannabis for medical uses.

### Prescription vs Online: What Are the Differences?

|                  |                                                                       |                                                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aspect           | Prescription Cannabis                                                 | Online Purchases                                            |
| Assessment       | Comprehensive medical review, including prior treatments and symptoms | None – buy without clinical input                           |
| Product Contents | Standardised, tested, labelled medication                             | Unknown, often unverified ingredients                       |
| Monitoring       | Regular follow-ups to adjust dose/evaluate side effects               | No follow-up or medical supervision                         |
| Costs            | Transparent costs linked to ongoing treatment plan                    | Often just initial price shown, no info on ongoing expenses |

## Assessment Before Treatment Choice: What Does This Look Like?

Before prescribing medical cannabis, NHS guidelines stress the importance of a detailed assessment. This includes:

- Reviewing your full medical history, including other medications and treatments you have tried
- Confirming the diagnosis and determining if cannabis is an appropriate option
- Discussing potential benefits and risks based on your condition and lifestyle
- Setting clear treatment goals and expectations

For example, if you have chronic pain and have tried multiple therapies without relief, your doctor may consider cannabis as a last option. But if you self-diagnose from online forums and order products through a website like Releaf, that vital clinical context is missing.

### Why Medical History and Prior Treatments Matter

Your previous treatments and medical conditions influence whether cannabis is safe or effective for you. Conditions such as heart disease or mental health issues can make cannabis riskier and may require closer monitoring.



Simply buying a cannabis oil online ignores this complexity, which is why the NHS insists on consulting a healthcare professional first. It's similar to how you wouldn't choose a heart medication without a full health check and doctor's advice.

## The Importance of Follow-Up and Monitoring

Treatment with medical cannabis is not a one-off purchase—it requires ongoing review. The NHS guidance explains that follow-up appointments are vital to:

- Monitor effectiveness and side effects
- Adjust dosage or switch products if necessary
- Ensure no harmful interactions with other medications
- Discuss concerns and support adherence to the treatment plan

This doesn't happen when you buy cannabis products online without prescription or medical supervision. Without monitoring, there's a risk of adverse effects going unnoticed or a lack of clarity about whether the treatment is working.

## What Follow-Up Looks Like in Practice

Your NHS doctor or specialist will schedule reviews at agreed intervals, often initially every few weeks to check how you respond. If side effects arise, your clinician can stop the treatment or change the formulation. This patient-centred approach safeguards your health in a way that unsupervised online purchase cannot.

## Realistic Costs Over Months, Not Just Day One

One common mistake is to focus only on the sticker price of the first cannabis product you buy online. Websites may advertise a "low price" for the initial purchase, but that's just the start:

- Effective treatment often lasts months or longer, requiring repeated purchases
- Doses may need adjusting, meaning buying new or different products
- There may be additional costs for consultations, monitoring, and managing side effects

In the NHS pathway, costs are more transparent as [what is specialist cannabis assessment](#) part of ongoing care. Private clinics also provide detailed price lists for all stages, not just initial appointments. When using online shops without guidance, people often underestimate the total financial commitment.

## How to Avoid the Exact Appointment Price Trap

When you review clinic websites or platforms like Releaf.co.uk, look for:

- Clear pricing for assessments, prescriptions, and follow-up visits
- Information about costs of prescription cannabis products over time
- Details about what is included in appointments (e.g., blood tests, monitoring)

Avoid services that only publish the initial appointment fee without clarifying follow-up expenses or product costs over the treatment period. The real value and safety come from the whole care package, not a one-time sale.

## How Can You Verify Reliable Information About Medical Cannabis?

The NHS website is the most trusted resource for understanding medical cannabis in the UK. Their medical cannabis page is regularly updated with:

- Latest clinical guidance
- Safety warnings
- You should also consult your GP or a specialist before considering cannabis treatment.

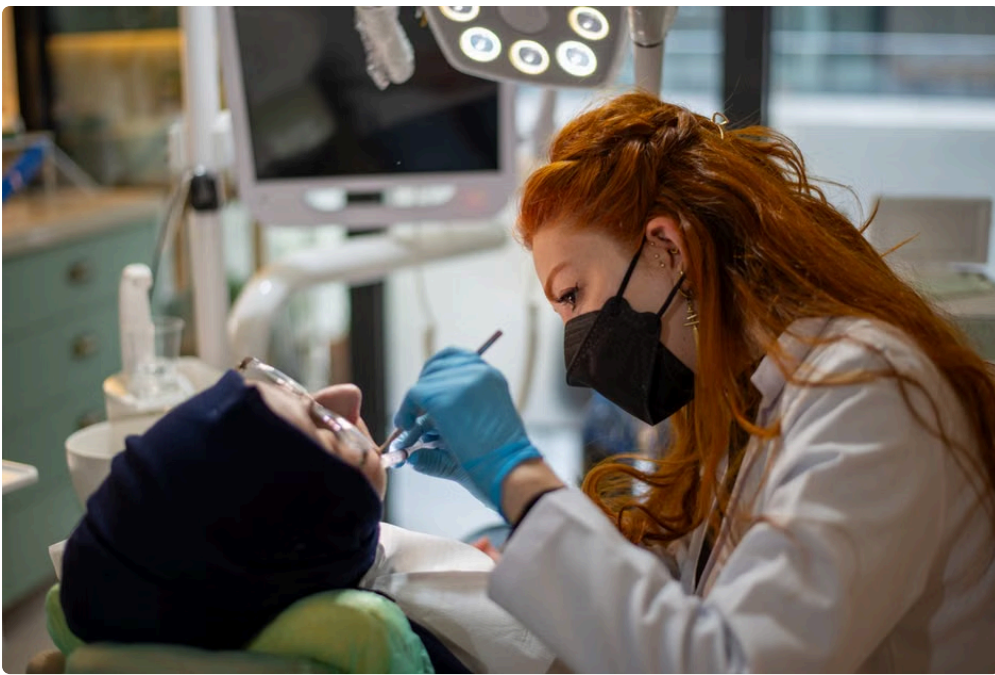
Moreover, when exploring private clinics offering medical cannabis, check their credentials, read reviews, and look for transparency on all elements of assessment, prescription, and follow-up. Websites offering quick fixes without clinical oversight should raise red flags.

## Summary Checklist: What to Ask At Your Cannabis Appointment

1. What clinical assessments will happen before recommending cannabis?
2. How will my medical history and prior treatments be reviewed?
3. What follow-up and monitoring are included as part of the treatment?
4. Can you provide a full breakdown of costs over the course of treatment, not just the initial appointment?
5. How do you ensure the cannabis products prescribed are safe, tested, and consistent?
6. What are the possible side effects and how are they managed?
7. How will we measure whether the treatment is working?

## Final Thoughts

The NHS warning about cannabis products purchased online is not to scare patients but to highlight genuine safety and treatment quality issues. Cannabis can have a place in treatment, but only under expert supervision—involving thorough assessment, tailored prescription, and ongoing follow-up.



If you're considering medical cannabis, start by discussing it with your doctor and consulting trusted NHS guidance pages. Be wary of online companies promoting quick, cheap cannabis products without medical oversight. Real health decisions need real clinical care—not a shopping cart checkout.