

CAN MED



CANNABIS HYPEREMESIS SYNDROME

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CHS

Definition:

Cleveland Clinic defines CHS as Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome (CHS) happens when you have cycles of nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain after using cannabis (marijuana) for a long time

STATS AND FACTS

- First case was seen in Australia in 1994
- In 2004, it was recognized as a condition.
- In my experience working in this area and in Emergency this condition is often diagnosed without the proper process. It is a diagnosis of exclusion meaning all other things must be ruled out.
- It is most often with people using recreational sourced flower in high doses (>3g/day). I have never had a medical patient using Canadian medical products experience CHS. (hundreds of patients over 10 yrs)

DIAGNOSIS

2

»» CVS vs CHS

Cyclic Vomiting Syndrome is the umbrella that also encompasses CHS.

Rome IV Diagnostic Criteria

Cyclic Vomiting Syndrome (CVS)

Diagnosis requires all of the following:

1. At least three episodes of intense nausea and vomiting in the past year.
2. Stereotypical episodes in each patient (similar onset, duration, symptoms).
3. Absence of vomiting between episodes (though milder symptoms may persist).
4. Symptoms are not explained by another condition.

For Physicians: When to Suspect & Diagnose CHS

Before concluding CHS, doctors MUST:

1. Exclude other causes: Rule out infections, GI pathologies, GI obstruction, metabolic imbalances, and pregnancy.
2. Assess cannabis history: Confirm use >1 year, typically ≥4 times weekly, onset of symptoms within hours of use
3. Check cyclic vomiting: ≥3 episodes per year, each lasting 24–48 hours
4. Identify hot bathing relief—a hallmark symptom
5. Track symptom resolution: Confirm disappearance during ≥6 months abstinence
6. Perform targeted workup: Include labs (CBC, CMP, urinalysis), pregnancy test, and imaging only as needed to rule out alternative diagnoses .
7. Differentiate CHS vs cannabis withdrawal: CHS symptoms occur <24 h after last use, while withdrawal manifests after >24 h; CHS features stereotypical hot bathing, cyclic pattern.

Cannabinoid Hyperemesis Syndrome (CHS)

Diagnosis includes:

1. Chronic cannabis use (usually daily use for months or years).
2. Cyclic episodes of nausea and vomiting.
3. Compulsive hot bathing behavior for symptom relief.
4. Resolution of symptoms with sustained cannabis abstinence.

CHS is a subset of CVS-like illness but distinguished by cannabis use and resolution after stopping it.



Treatments:

>6 months abstinence,
capsaicin cream topically to
abdomen
low dose Haloperidol.

THERE IS CONTRAVERSITY OVER WHAT CAUSES CHS. IT SEEMS TO BE MOSTLY WITH FLOWER AND POSSIBLY RELATED TO PESTICIDES/HEAVY METALS. THERE IS ALSO A GENETIC COMPONENT.



Endocannabinoid System History

Maccarrone M. Tribute to Professor Raphael Mechoulam, The Founder of Cannabinoid and Endocannabinoid Research. *Molecules*. 2022 Jan 5;27(1):323. doi: 10.3390/molecules27010323. PMID: 35011553; PMCID: PMC8746417.

Cannabis Hyperemesis Syndrome

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/21665-cannabis-hyperemesis-syndrome>

https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/-/media/files/allchildrens/clinical-pathways/chs_pathway-5_19_23.pdf

<https://phillyintegrative.com/blog/cannabinoid-hyperemesis-syndrome-insights-from-recent-research>

<https://gastro.org/news/cannabinoid-hyperemesis-syndrome-clinical-practice-update/>

Cannabis Product Labelling

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/personal-use/how-read-understand-cannabis-product-label.html>

Possessing and Storing Cannabis

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/people-registered-designated-produce-cannabis-medical-purposes.html>

Information for Health Care Professionals - Health Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/information-medical-practitioners.html>

Health Canada Medical Document:

https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/migration/hc-sc/dhp-mps/alt_formats/pdf/marihuana/info/med-eng.pdf

Health Canada Information for Health Care Professionals

<file:///Users/jenniferanderson/Downloads/information-for-health-professionals.pdf>

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