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New Zealand makes classification change to low-dose medicinal cannabis products

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Decision follows careful consideration of the risk-benefit profile of low-dose CBD



Medsafe, the New Zealand Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Authority, the medical regulatory body run by the New Zealand Ministry of Health, has taken a step towards easier access to one medicinal cannabis product by allowing access over the counter at pharmacies, though any approved products in this category are still some time away.

Medsafe has reclassified the medicinal cannabis product, cannabidiol (CBD), from a prescription-only medicine to a restricted (pharmacist-only) medicine, aligning its approach with Australia, which made a similar change in December 2020.

While no CBD products are currently approved in New Zealand, this change means that any low-dose CBD product which becomes approved in the future can be supplied by registered pharmacists to patients over 18 years. No products in this category are available in Australia either at this stage. The decision follows careful consideration of the risk-benefit profile of low-dose CBD by Medsafe, and includes consultation with healthcare professionals, industry, and the public.