



A Beginner's Guide

Where to Begin

A judgment-free guide to cannabis, with confidence and care.

The New Lavender · by Shannon Donnelly

Hi, I'm Shannon.

For nearly twenty years I've helped people take their very first step with cannabis — students, wine-drinking moms, curious retirees, people who swore they'd never touch it. If you're holding this guide, you're exactly who I made it for.

Cannabis doesn't have to be intimidating. Most of the fear around it comes from bad information and bad first experiences — and almost every bad first experience comes down to one thing: **too much, too fast**. We're going to fix that right now.

This guide isn't medical advice, and it won't tell you what to do for any health condition — always talk to a qualified professional about that, and follow the laws where you live. What it *will* do is give you the same calm, honest starting point I give everyone I teach.

The only two rules you really need

1. Low and slow.

Start with the smallest real dose and give it time. That's the whole secret. The people who have a rough first time almost always skipped this.

2. You can always take more. You can never take less.

Once it's in your body, you're along for the ride — so we start small on purpose. A first experience that's pleasant and a little *underwhelming* is a win. It means you stayed in control.

THC vs. CBD, in one breath

THC is the part that gets you high. **CBD** does *not* get you high — most people describe it as relaxing and clear-headed. They come from the same plant and are often blended. If feeling "altered" makes you nervous, CBD is a wonderful place to start.

You do not have to smoke it

Most of the folks I teach never smoke at all. Your options:

- **Edibles** — gummies, chocolates, baked goods
- **Beverages** — seltzers, teas, mocktails
- **Tinctures** — a few drops under the tongue
- **Capsules** — familiar, measured, discreet
- **Topicals** — lotions and balms that don't get you high at all

Your first dose

If you're trying an **edible**, start with **2.5 mg of THC** — even though the package says a "serving" is 5 or 10 mg. That size is written for someone with experience. Then **wait two full hours** before thinking about more.

Starting point	Who it's for
2.5 mg	Brand new / very sensitive. Start here.
5 mg	Comfortable after a few good 2.5 mg experiences.
10 mg+	Experienced — not a beginner dose, whatever the label says.

A rule of thumb, not a prescription — your body is the real guide.

Why edibles take so long

Because they go through your **digestive system**, not your lungs. Smoking shows up in minutes; an edible can take **30 minutes to two hours**. This is where the classic mistake happens: "I don't feel anything yet..." followed by a second gummy — and then both hit at once. Set a two-hour timer and find something to do.

If you ever feel like it's too much

First, breathe. **Nobody has ever died from a cannabis overdose.** You are going to be okay, even if it doesn't feel like it. Then:

1. Get somewhere calm and comfortable.
2. Drink water. Eat a snack.
3. Put on something familiar — a favorite show, easy music.
4. Try sniffing or chewing a few black peppercorns (an old trick many of us swear by).
5. Let time do the rest. It always passes.

And next time? **Less.**

Your first-time checklist

- Nowhere to be and **no driving** — clear your evening
- Starting dose measured (**2.5 mg** if it's an edible)
- A two-hour timer set before any "more"
- Water and a snack nearby
- Someone you trust knows, or is with you
- A comfortable, familiar setting

A few myths, cleared up

"Indica makes you sleepy, sativa gives you energy." A useful shorthand, but the specific product matters far more than the label. Notice how *you* feel and take notes.

"CBD can't show up on a drug test." It can — full-spectrum CBD can carry enough trace THC to trigger one. If your job tests, know the policy first.

"You can travel between two legal states with it." Please don't. Crossing state lines is a federal issue. Buy it where you land.

Where to go next

You've got the foundation. When you're ready for more:

- **Cannabis 101** — my full beginner course, with free lesson previews
- **The New Lavender FAQ** — the questions I get asked most, answered plainly
- **Join the community** — new classes, events, and honest guidance

Take your time. Stay curious. And remember — low and slow.

With warmth,

Shannon

This guide is cannabis education for informational purposes only and is not medical or legal advice. Always consult a qualified professional about your health or specific situation, and follow the laws where you live. Keep cannabis products away from children and pets.