

# A popular substance

## A current survey by the BfR collects data on the consumption of cannabidiol in Germany for the first time.

It is becoming apparent that there will be a global increase in the sale of products containing cannabidiol (CBD) in the coming years. Based on initial analyses, market researchers in the US, for example, predict that the market will grow around 20 percent annually over the next five years – a business worth billions. The latest data from the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) show that consumption will also continue to increase in Germany.

Until now, little was known about the consumption behaviour in Germany. In 2021, a team of experts from the BfR investigated the following topics for the first time using an online survey of 2,000 people who have already heard of CBD: Who consumes products with CBD – and why? How do people rate the health risk compared to the benefit?

Half of the respondents (50%) who had not yet consumed products with CBD say they would purchase or use such products in the future. 27 percent of respondents have already consumed or used the substance. Among them, the proportion of people under 30 is slightly higher than in the older age groups. “According to our survey, the reasons for consumption are diverse,” says Johanna Geppert, Communication Scientist at the BfR. “Among others, a potential pain-relief effect or the potential help for relaxation were mentioned, but also pure curiosity about the product.” CBD is also mostly consumed on a regular basis: 42 percent of people who have already consumed CBD say they use products at least once a week. By far the most popular are oils and tinctures. They are mainly purchased in online stores – with important buying criteria being the CBD content and the price.

According to Johanna Geppert, the fact that 50 percent of the respondents who have not yet tried CBD products could imagine doing so also fits in with the result that the health benefits of the products are rated much higher even by people who have not yet consumed



CBD: more than half of these respondents (51%) see a (very) high benefit. In comparison, only a good eighth (13%) suspect a (very) high risk.

The most likely perceived health risk is a possible habituation to CBD and dependency on CBD. 30 percent of the respondents believe that CBD products may contain THC. However, fewer respondents (24%) believe that the substance CBD may have an intoxicating effect. Before consuming the products, 29 percent of the 60-plus age group sought medical advice; this figure was 14 percent in the under-30 age group. Only 40 percent of the respondents believe that the effect of medicines can be influenced by CBD products. Five percent report side-effects following consumption. ■