

How to Identify Safe, Real CBD Products



The word is out and CBD products are all the rage in the world of holistic wellness. From bite-sized gummies and tasty chocolates to the latest in tinctures and drops, there are an abundance of CBD brands available. The question remains: How does one identify safe, real CBD products from the rest? Keep reading and find out.

The most important thing to remember when shopping for [CBD products](#) is that the actions of a company speak volumes about them, their business ethics, and their integrity. For instance, there is only one CBD-

based, prescription pharmaceutical on the market that is FDA approved. It's a drug called Epidiolex[®], and it's prescribed to fight two specific forms of children's severe epileptic conditions. This means is that any medical claims about CBD treating or curing any other ailment illness, or condition have yet to be clinically proven and could possibly be falsified.

In other words, if a company claims that CBD will alleviate chronic pain, that company is making unethical claims that are in violation of the law. In our opinion, companies that willfully and knowingly falsely advertise don't typically intend to be in business for a long time. If I'm going to ingest a wellness product, such as some CBD gummies, I'd like to rest easier knowing that the brand plans to be in business for a very long time and can therefore stand behind their product's quality, versus one that merely wants to make a quick buck before closing down shop. Be extremely cautious of CBD products from a brand or company that makes these false medical

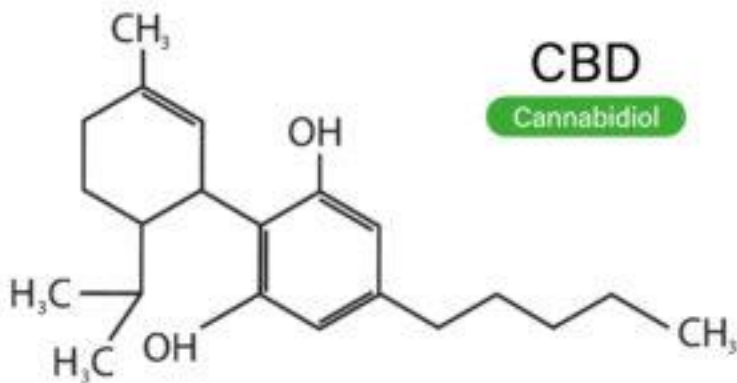


claims, for if they're willing to circumvent commonly known laws, there's a strong possibility that they're also willing to take other unscrupulous shortcuts.

The same principle applies to "CBD" products you see for sale on Amazon. Amazon's rules are pretty clear and straightforward in that they currently do not allow CBD sales. We've seen a few companies circumvent this rule by repackaging their CBD products or by simply removing CBD from its label, product name or description in order to sell on Amazon. Instead of being honest about their products containing CBD or stating a product is a CBD-infused product, these companies sometimes describe their

Amazon products as "Hemp Infused." While CBD is derived from the hemp plant, the issue is that this type of dishonesty tends to lead to unintended problems.

Unlike with CBD, the sale of hemp seeds (which are a nutrient rich source of protein) and hemp seed oil, was legal in the U.S. even before passage of the 2018 farm bill, and thus, they're available for purchase on Amazon. For example, let's say that your business, "company X" has been selling hemp seed oil on Amazon for over a decade and your 4oz. bottle retails for \$7.00 per bottle. Then, the 2018 Farm Bill passes, which causes the emergence of numerous new CBD companies in the market. While there is nothing wrong with competition, the chance of confusion taking place amongst consumers rises. This is due to some companies disguising their CBD-infused oil as "hemp-infused" oil or even as "hemp extract", but this time, a 1oz. bottle of their oil retails for \$59.00 per unit.



Unwitting consumers may question this price difference once they see an influx of similar products at similar price points, which heightens the risk of them believing that your bottle of hemp seed oil that retails at just \$7.00 per bottle may be inferior. If this continues, it can significantly impact your business. In an effort to compete, there is the option for you to re-label your

hemp seed oil as “hemp extract oil” (because that is technically truthful), and repackage your hemp seed oil in 1oz. bottles, with a \$55 price tag. You’re now selling \$1.75 worth of hemp seed oil at an upcharge of \$53.25. Awesome, right? No, because it is not an ethical or sustainable business practice. While this is an overly simplified example, the lesson is simple: Neither company is being honest or ethical. While the companies with CBD-infused products are slipping passed Amazon’s rules by not being upfront with the CBD content in their products, your company’s hemp oil (that has no CBD content) runs the risk of being associated with [CBD-infused products](#).

The question now is: If a CBD manufacturer is dishonest in order to sell on Amazon, what else are they being dishonest about? Cannabinoid content in their products? Claims that state that their products don’t contain heavy metals or pesticides? Without further regulation, we have no way of knowing what may be in those bottles. As a point of clarification, while we use the term “examples” to describe some of these practices, it’s important to note that there is a good chance of this happening right now.

Another common practice to watch out for is when manufacturers incorporate intentionally misleading stamps or seals on their packaging. You might come across a [CBD product](#) with a stamp on the front of its label that states that it’s certified 100% pure, or registered 100% organic, along with additional verbiage that says this product was manufactured in an FDA-approved facility or third-party lab tests were performed by an FDA-approved lab. The nuances can be vast, but here are the basics: First of all, FDA-certified labs are currently not allowed to qualify products with CBD content outside of the actual drug, Epidiolex[®]. Thus, any claims made in this regard are untrue. Furthermore, if an FDA-certified lab were to test CBD products (outside of the stated pharmaceutical use), then they could run the risk of being stripped of their certification since they are not allowed to handle unapproved substances at this time.

Another thing to be aware of regarding seals or gold-colored stamps that often appear on product labels or packaging, is that in many cases, these seals are nothing more than carefully placed



artwork. Often times, a company can cleverly invent or design these to give their product an “official-looking” seal or stamp, but those seals may not really hold any validity. While there are some organizations, such as the U.S. Hemp Roundtable, that has a seal of approval, which can be seen on a variety of products,

it’s important to note that this is a membership organization and not a regulatory organization. And, a CBD manufacturer’s membership, or lack thereof, to this type of organization has no real impact on the quality of their actual product. Furthermore, these organizations aren’t regulated and thus, there is no way of telling whether they have done any type of background testing of the products that carry their official seal. The general rule of thumb is that stamps and seals have virtually no meaning, since there is no recognized national standard for testing these products.

There is, however, one product packaging claim that isn’t necessarily deceptive. This is the “cGMP certified” claim, in which a product was manufactured using a GMP certified facility. GMP stands for “good manufacturing and distribution practices” and this is an actual certification for which many manufacturers strive for and it often takes a couple of years to achieve. Once a facility has been issued the certification, they can legally say they are cGMP, or certified for good manufacturing practices. We caution however that the companies who print these packages don’t verify any of the claims on the boxes they’re printing. It’s up to the manufacturers to be honest with regard to the claims they make, and unfortunately that’s not always the case.

How can one go about buying a good quality CBD product that is safe? There are several steps you can go through to vet CBD products before you make a purchase. Luckily, most of these questions can be answered with a quick Google search of the brand.

1. Look at the product’s reviews. Are the reviews positive? Are there several thousand reviews, or are there just a handful of reviews?
2. Look at the company’s “Contact Us” page (if they have one). Is it just a blank form to be filled out in the hope that someone will get in touch with you in the future, or do they list actual contact information, such as a headquarters address and customer support phone number, as most legit companies do?

3. Does the company post third-party lab test results on their website? Are the name, address, and phone number of the laboratory viable on the posted results? If the answer to any of these questions is “no,” we would recommend against buying that product. While lab results don’t guarantee a product’s quality, (sometimes the posted results are from older batches, or completely forged altogether), it’s accepted in the industry that posting current lab results is the absolute minimum a manufacturer should do to instill customer confidence.

4. Assuming that the manufacturer has a good number of positive customer reviews, provides customers with a real way to contact them, and has current results posted from a third-party lab, congratulate yourself for a job well done on finding a potentially good CBD product. You’ve already bypassed the majority of unscrupulous companies out there. The last thing we recommend doing is taking another good look at the packaging. If there is a run number, lot number, or batch number, then chances are you’re holding a decent product. Certainly not every quality manufacturer is printing this information on their labels and packages yet, but with each passing day, more and more of them are.

As popularity of CBD continues to grow and distribution areas continue to widen, the manufacturers that plan on being in this business for years and years to come have started to add these code numbers to their products in the name of consumer safety. If there’s ever an issue with one of their products, they’re prepared to track down the problem and issue a recall, if necessary.