

Starting a new medical treatment, especially involving unlicensed medicines such as medical cannabis in the UK, raises many questions. Among the most important is how often you should expect to see your doctor for follow-up during those critical early months. This blog post sets out the key points about regulation, legal prescribing, specialist competence, and how to spot safe and responsible clinics. We focus particularly on **dose titration**, **review frequency**, and **adverse effect checks**.

## Regulation and Clinic Oversight: Why It Matters

When choosing a clinic for any treatment, especially something as new and complex as medical cannabis, understanding regulatory oversight helps you ensure safety and quality.

- **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** – The CQC is the independent regulator for health and social care services in England. Private clinics offering medical cannabis must be registered with the CQC, which conducts inspections and monitors compliance with standards. This includes the training of staff, patient safety, record-keeping, and governance.
- **General Medical Council (GMC) Specialist Register** – Doctors who prescribe must be registered with the GMC and, ideally, listed on the Specialist Register if they claim expertise in the therapeutic area. This register confirms the doctor has undergone additional accredited training in a specialist field related to your condition.

*Pro tip:* Always ask clinics for their CQC registration number and the GMC numbers of the doctors involved before proceeding. Clinics that hide or refuse to share this information should be treated with caution.

## Who Is Legally Allowed to Prescribe Medical Cannabis in the UK?

Prescribing medical <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2026/08/334132/what-makes-a-high-quality-medical-cannabis-clinic/> cannabis carries extra responsibilities because the products are mostly unlicensed medicines in the UK. Here's what you need to know:

1. **Specialist doctors only:** Since November 2018, only doctors on the GMC Specialist Register related to your condition can prescribe medical cannabis. This means GPs and non-specialists are not authorised to initiate prescriptions.
2. **Unlicensed medicines regulation:** Medical cannabis products are largely unlicensed, so clinicians must explain risks, potential benefits, and uncertainties clearly. This involves explicit risk disclosure and detailed consent processes.
3. **Documentation and Liability:** Prescribers need to keep detailed records on the indication for use, dosing plans, and follow-up. This is monitored by both the GMC and CQC during inspections.

Remember, if a clinic tries to initiate treatment without confirmed specialist prescribing, or presses you to sign vague disclaimers without thorough discussion, these are red flags.

## Understanding Dose Titration and Review Frequency in the First Few Months

Dose titration means starting at a low dose and gradually increasing it to find the optimal balance between effectiveness and side effects. Because medical cannabis affects people differently, carefully planned dose adjustments and frequent monitoring are vital.

## Typical Follow-Up Schedule

Time Since Start Typical Appointment Purpose Key Checks & Actions Week 1–2 Initial dose review

- Assess tolerability
- Check for early adverse effects (e.g. dizziness, fatigue)
- Adjust dose if needed

Week 4–6 Further dose adjustment

- Assess symptom response
- Ask about side effects
- Consider dose increases or plateaus

Week 8–12 Comprehensive review

- Evaluate overall effectiveness
- Detailed assessment of adverse effects
- Discuss continuation or stopping treatment
- Plan next steps or referrals

Clinics genuinely committed to patient safety provide this clear schedule and do not bundle consultations into opaque monthly subscriptions that obscure your actual review frequency.

## What Happens at Each Review?

- **Adverse Effects Checks:** The doctor or nurse will ask open questions about any new or worsening symptoms since the last visit. This includes common cannabis side effects like dry mouth, sleepiness, or changes in mood.
- **Effectiveness Assessment:** Using both your subjective feedback and standard symptom scores (sometimes), the clinic evaluates if the medicine is helping.
- **Dose Adjustments:** Based on responses, doses may be raised slowly or decreased if side effects are problematic.
- **Safety Monitoring:** Some clinics include baseline and follow-up blood tests or other investigations, tailored to your condition and medicines.

If a clinic does not schedule or conduct regular, face-to-face or video reviews in these early weeks, be wary. Telephone-only follow-ups or generic email check-ins without a doctor or specialist nurse present are often signs of a low-quality service.

## Specialist Competence and Scope: What to Look For

Not all clinics claiming expertise in medical cannabis have specialists truly qualified to prescribe it safely.

- **Verify specialist registration:** Is the prescribing doctor listed on the GMC Specialist Register? Ask for their GMC number and check it online yourself.
- **Relevant clinical experience:** Specialists should have experience treating your particular condition (e.g., neurology for epilepsy or pain medicine for chronic pain).
- **Scope of practice:** Beware clinics that market doctors as “cannabis specialists” with no recognised medical credentials or experience in your condition.

- **Transparent team details:** Does the clinic provide clear information about their medical team, including professional backgrounds and licenses?

Clinics that cannot name their specialist doctors or who rely on vague terms like “specialist doctors” without details often do not meet the professional standards expected by the CQC.

## Unlicensed Medicines and Risk Disclosure: What You Should Expect

Since medical cannabis products are mostly unlicensed in the UK, informed consent is critical.

- Your prescriber must explain that the medicine is unlicensed and discuss what this means, including uncertainties regarding long-term safety and efficacy.
- Risks and benefits should be clearly laid out in plain English before you start treatment.
- A proper risk disclosure will also cover potential interactions with other medicines and contraindications.
- You should receive written materials summarising this information and what to do if adverse effects occur.

Many clinics rush this process or rely on fine print — do not accept this. A thorough risk disclosure is a sign of responsible care.

## Summary: Your 3-Minute Checklist for a Safe First Few Months

1. **Ask for the clinic’s CQC registration number** and verify it on the official CQC website.
2. **Request the GMC numbers** of your prescribing doctors and confirm their specialist registration relevant to your condition.
3. **Ensure a clear follow-up schedule** focused on dose titration, review frequency at 1–2 weeks, 4–6 weeks, and 8–12 weeks minimum.
4. **Look for explicit risk disclosures** about unlicensed status and possible side effects.
5. **Insist on regular face-to-face or video consultations** with clinical staff who can assess adverse effects and adjust treatment.
6. **Avoid clinics** that use vague “specialist” claims or opaque subscription packages hiding consultation fees.

## Final Thoughts

The first few months of medical cannabis treatment can be complex and require careful monitoring. UK regulatory bodies like the CQC and GMC have set clear rules to protect patients, but enforcement and awareness vary across the private sector. Being proactive—checking registration numbers, understanding your prescriber’s credentials, and insisting on regular reviews—will help you get safe and effective care.

Ask yourself this: never settle for vague answers or hidden fees. Your health depends on transparent communication and clinics that prioritize your safety through consistent monitoring, especially dose titration and adverse effect checks during the earliest phase of treatment.



If you have questions about your clinic's follow-up policies or need help interpreting their claims, keep a notebook of anything vague they say—it often points to potential problems down the line.

