

Swiss to lift ban on medical use cannabis

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The Swiss government on Wednesday decided to lift the ban on cannabis for medical use from August 1.

Patients who are medically prescribed the drug will no longer need to seek exceptional permission from the health ministry.

The sale and consumption of cannabis for non-medical purposes will remain prohibited.

The government "intends to facilitate access to cannabis for medical use for patients" and was therefore lifting the ban on its use for that purpose, it said in a statement.

Parliament backed amending the law in March 2021.

"The decision to use a cannabis-based medicine for therapeutic purposes will rest with the doctor, in consultation with the patient," the government said.

The new regulations could benefit thousands of people suffering from severe chronic pain, it added, including those with cancer and multiple sclerosis.

Demand for cannabis-based treatments has risen sharply, with the [health ministry](#) issuing 3,000 exceptional authorisations in 2019.

But this involved "tedious administrative procedures", said the ministry.

"Sick people must be able to access these medicines without excessive bureaucracy."

The law change will also mean that the cultivation, processing, manufacture and trade of cannabis for medical use will be subject to the Swissmedic [regulatory authority](#), just as with other narcotics for [medical use](#) such as cocaine, methadone and morphine.

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