

A bottle can say “third-party tested” on the label and still leave you with basic questions: Which batch was tested? What did the lab look for? Can you see the results before you buy? A careful CBD shop should be able to answer those questions without turning the conversation into a sales pitch.

CBD, short for cannabidiol, is a compound found in cannabis and hemp plants. The 2018 Farm Bill changed the federal definition of hemp by removing certain hemp products from the federal Controlled Substances Act, provided they meet the law’s delta-9 THC limit. That change helped hemp-derived CBD become more common in pharmacies, wellness stores and neighborhood shops. It did not, by itself, make every CBD product safe, legal in every situation, or proven to treat a health condition. State rules and product quality still matter.

If you are shopping in South Florida or elsewhere, use the questions below to check a product’s paperwork, understand what “THC-free” can—and cannot—mean, and get a clear price before you leave the counter.

Start with the batch-specific certificate of analysis

A certificate of analysis, or COA, is a lab report that lists the sample tested and the results for particular substances. The key detail is whether it applies to the exact batch you are considering, rather than to a different batch or a product formula in general.

Questions to ask about the COA

- “Can I see the batch-specific COA for this exact product?”
- “Where is the batch or lot number on the package, and where does it appear on the report?”
- “Can I open the report now, rather than just scan a QR code that leads to the company’s home page?”
- “When was this batch tested, and when was the report issued?”
- “Was the sample tested by an independent laboratory?”

Match the lot or batch number on the bottle to the number on the report. A QR code can be convenient, but it is not proof by itself: it should lead to a report that identifies the product and batch. If the shop cannot find the report or the numbers do not match, treat that as a reason to pause—not as a paperwork detail you need to overlook.

Check the report date, too. A COA from an old batch may not describe what is in the package today. Ask the store whether it keeps reports for the products it sells and how it handles new shipments when the batch changes.

Ask what the lab tested for

A COA is only as useful as the tests it includes. Some reports focus mainly on cannabinoid content. Others also report screening for contaminants. Ask the shop what the lab tested and whether the results are available for each category.

- **Cannabinoids:** Does the report list CBD and THC amounts, along with any other cannabinoids the product claims to contain?
- **Residual solvents:** If solvents were used during extraction, does the report show whether any remain?
- **Pesticides:** Did the lab screen for pesticide residues?
- **Heavy metals:** Were metals such as lead, arsenic, cadmium and mercury included?

- **Microbes and mold:** Does the report include relevant microbial testing, especially for products where that screening is appropriate?

Look at the actual results, not just the word “pass.” Ask what the lab’s detection limits are—the lowest amounts its method can reliably identify—and how the brand interprets a result marked “not detected.” That phrase does not necessarily mean a substance is absent in every possible amount; it means the test did not find it above the method’s reporting threshold.

It is also reasonable to ask who runs the tests. A laboratory that is independent of the product maker offers a separate check on the maker’s claims. Some labs hold ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation, a formal recognition of technical competence for specified tests. If a shop mentions accreditation, ask whether it applies to the particular tests listed on that COA.

Ask how the CBD was made and refined

Extraction is the process of separating desired compounds from the hemp plant. Refinement is the further processing used to change or clean up the extract. These steps can affect what ends up in the finished product, so ask the shop to explain the manufacturer’s process in plain language.



Questions about production

- “What extraction method does the manufacturer use?”
- “Are solvents used, and how are any residues checked?”
- “What refinement steps happen after extraction?”
- “Is the finished product tested after formulation, or only is the raw extract tested?”
- “Does the COA cover the oil, gummy or other product I’m buying—not just an ingredient used to make it?”

A brand may describe its process as supercritical CO2 extraction, ethanol extraction or another method. The name of a method alone does not prove the final product is clean or consistent. A useful answer connects the process to quality checks—for example, explaining how the finished batch is tested for cannabinoid content and relevant contaminants.

Also ask whether the amount of CBD on the label refers to each serving or the whole container. Those are different quantities. For a liquid, the label should help you understand the amount per serving and how large that serving is; for gummies, check the amount in each piece as well as the package total.

Understand full-spectrum, broad-spectrum and isolate

These labels describe the types of hemp compounds a product is intended to contain. They do not replace a batch-specific COA.

Label What it generally means **Question to ask** **Full-spectrum** CBD plus other hemp compounds, potentially including a small amount of THC. "How much THC does this batch report show?" **Broad-spectrum** A mix of hemp compounds marketed as having THC removed or reduced; the exact profile can vary. "Does the COA show THC as detected, not detected, or below a stated limit?" **Isolate** A product made with CBD isolated from most or all other hemp compounds. "Does the report confirm the CBD amount and show the other tested cannabinoids?"

People sometimes hear about the "entourage effect." This is the idea that hemp compounds may work together differently than they do on their own; it is not a guarantee that a blend will produce a particular benefit. It is one reason shoppers may compare full-spectrum and broad-spectrum products, but it should not be used as a substitute for evidence about a product or for advice from a qualified health professional.

If you want THC-free, ask for evidence—and understand drug-test risk

"THC-free" is a claim to verify, not a phrase to accept on faith. Ask for the current batch-specific COA and look for the THC results, the test method and any reporting limit. If the report does not test for THC or does not identify a limit, it cannot tell you much about how much THC might be present.

Even a product labeled broad-spectrum or THC-free may not eliminate every drug-testing concern. A test result can depend on the product, how often and how much someone uses, individual factors, and the type and cutoff of the test. Some hemp-derived products may contain trace THC, and product labels or testing may not perfectly reflect what is in every serving. No retailer can guarantee that using CBD will not affect a drug test.

If your job, sport, probation conditions or another requirement makes a positive THC test a serious concern, the most cautious choice is to avoid CBD and other hemp-derived products that could contain THC. Ask a clinician or the organization responsible for the testing rules for guidance. Do not rely on a salesperson's assurance that a product is "safe for drug tests."

Do not forget the price

A common shopping mistake is comparing products from an article, listing or store page that includes no prices. Without the actual price, you cannot tell whether one bottle is a better value than another. Prices also vary by retailer, package size and promotion, so do not assume an online price applies at the local counter.



Ask the shop for the current out-the-door price, including taxes or other charges, and compare products using the labeled CBD amount. A lower sticker price does not necessarily mean a lower cost for the same amount of CBD. Ask how many milligrams are in the whole package and per serving, then calculate the price per milligram if you are comparing similar products.

- “What is the current price, and is that price for one bottle or a multipack?”
- “How many milligrams of CBD are in the package and in each serving?”
- “Are there added costs, and does the price differ by flavor, strength or product type?”
- “Can I see the batch-specific COA before deciding?”

Price is not a quality test. Use it alongside the COA, label details and the shop’s willingness to answer questions—not in place of them.

A quick checklist before you buy

1. Match the product’s lot number to the batch number on its certificate of analysis.
2. Check the report date and confirm it is for the product in your hand.
3. Review cannabinoid results and ask about contaminant testing and detection limits.
4. Ask whether an independent lab tested the finished product.
5. Clarify whether the product is full-spectrum, broad-spectrum or isolate—and verify the claims on the COA.
6. If drug testing matters to you, do not rely on “THC-free” wording as a guarantee.
7. Get the current price and compare it with the labeled amount of CBD.

A reputable [CBD for stress](#) shop may not know every technical detail from memory, but it should be willing to locate the paperwork and explain what it can. If the staff cannot show a batch-specific certificate of analysis, dodges questions about lab testing and refinement, or promises a result it cannot guarantee, consider another product or another shop. The practical standard is simple: clear answers, traceable testing and no miracle claims.