



Synthetic Cannabinoids (Known as Synthetic Marijuana) August 2015

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- **Synthetic Cannabinoids (called synthetic marijuana) are extremely dangerous and addictive.**
- **These substances can be life-threatening with intense hallucinations and psychotic episodes. Individuals may have suicidal thoughts and can hurt, maim or even kill themselves or others while under the influence of these man-made substances.**
- Effects of use can range from irregularities in blood pressure, agitation, irritability, nausea/vomiting, confusion, drowsiness, headache, electrolyte abnormalities, seizures, anxiety, paranoia, aggressive behavior, loss of consciousness addiction, kidney failure, hypertension and even death.
- Synthetic cannabinoids are man-made drug that can be particularly popular among young people. Homeless people have also been found to be particularly vulnerable to the use of synthetics.
- Synthetic liquid compounds are applied to dried leaves and plants to give a natural appearance, similar to marijuana, but in reality the plants have nothing to do with marijuana. For that reason the name is very misleading and may lead users to believe that the drug is far less harmful than it really is.
- The substances are often marketed as an inexpensive way to get a marijuana-like high or as legal alternative to marijuana.
- Synthetic marijuana has been sold under brand names such as K2, Spice, Green Giant, Geeked Up, Caution, Smacked, Wicked X, AK-47, Herbal Incense, Fake Weed, Yucatan Fire, Skunk, Moon Rocks, Fire, Aroma, Earth impact, Mr. Smiley, Mr. Nice Guy, Zohai, Black Mamba, Dream and other names.
- Synthetic marijuana is often packaged in foil packets that can be marked as home incense, or herbal smoking blends. Packaging often has claims that the contents are safe and natural and not easily detected in standard drug tests. However, there is nothing natural about the psychoactive chemicals applied to the naturally occurring plants.
- Other times packages will be labeled as “not for human consumption.”
- Synthetic marijuana is generally smoked and is extremely dangerous due to the manner the chemicals bind to the receptors in the brain, particularly to the adolescent and young adult with a developing brain.
- These products are sold on-line and in drug paraphernalia stores, bodegas, gas stations, convenience stores, and other similar retail establishments.
- It is illegal in New York State to possess, sell, offer to sell, or to manufacture synthetic cannabinoids.

[Public Health Law Section 225, Title 10, Part 9.]

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Start the conversation about alcohol and drug abuse and new designer drugs. Explain that synthetic marijuana is very different from marijuana. They contain powerful chemicals and can be dangerous – even deadly.
- Explain to your child that synthetic marijuana is NOT marijuana.
- If someone is having difficulty breathing or any of the above possible reactions, call 911. If you suspect someone has used synthetic marijuana, contact the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. If you have information about the illegal distribution of bath salts or synthetic drugs, call the NYS Governors Synthetics Hotline: 1-888-99-SALTS. Reports can be made anonymously.
- Synthetic cannabinoids are not detected by standard urine toxicology screens; therefore exposure should not be ruled out based on negative screening results.
- Referrals for addiction treatment are available by calling or texting the New York State’s HOPEline at 1-877-846-7369 or New York City’s 1-800-LIFENET hotline.