

Not For Human Consumption: Spice And Bath Salts

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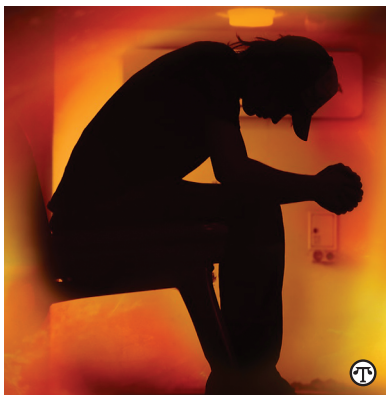
(NAPSA)—A recent Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) report revealed that emergency department visits resulting from synthetic marijuana more than doubled in just one year.

Most commonly known as Spice, synthetic cannabinoids go by many street names such as K2, Spice, Diamond, fake weed, Yucatan Fire, Moon Rocks and Skunk. The herb is often marketed as herbal incense and potpourri, and labeled “not for human consumption,” making it legal to sell and for minors to purchase the drug. Manufacturers sometimes include “organic” in the name to give the appearance of a natural product that does not harm health. Similar to how cigarettes were once marketed, Spice packaging often features cartoons and images appealing to the 12 to 18 age group, and the product can easily be purchased online, or in convenience stores or head shops.

What Makes Spice So Dangerous?

Spice (synthetic cannabinoid) is a designer drug that is made with analogs or a chemical structure similar to commonly used illicit drugs. The composition of these products changes constantly, as manufacturers create new variations to get around legislation to make a specific compound illegal. The man-made chemicals are typically sprayed on a plant or herb (not marijuana) that is most commonly smoked, and mimics the effects of the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. Because this product is labeled “not for human consumption,” the intended use is masked and production is not subject to quality control procedures or oversight that would be applied to other drugs; what makes its way into the hands of teens may contain substances that can have serious health consequences. With no warning labels, young people are not aware that using these products can be harmful or even deadly.

It is most often young men who reach the point of crisis and seek medical care for a range of symptoms that can include severe agitation, anxiety, nausea, vomiting, rapid



Parents, teachers and doctors can protect young people from a pair of dangerous street drugs.

heartbeat, elevated blood pressure, tremors, seizures, hallucinations, paranoia and unresponsiveness.

Bath Salts:

Another Threat

Bath salts are another designer drug marketed to and used by youth in a manner similar to Spice. Bath salts are also used by those 20 to 29 years old. Known commonly as Bliss, Bloom, Ivory Wave and Scarface, bath salts contain synthetic cathinones similar to amphetamines. Sometimes marketed as jewelry cleaner, plant food or phone screen cleaner, bath salts are presumed to contain methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV) and other similar chemicals, although there is uncertainty because tests do not always detect these substances. When bath salts are used, the effects can include agitation, aggression and violent behavior, anxiety and panic attacks, paranoia, confusion, hallucinations and delusions, psychosis, chest pains, increased heart rate, heightened blood pressure and sometimes suicidal ideation or suicide attempts.

Undetectable In Drug Screens

The synthetic designer drugs are also popular with people who are subject to mandatory drug testing. Although some of the psychoactive compounds can be detected in tests, many routine drug screens do not pick up these chemicals.

For prevention information and more about Spice and other substances, visit www.newsletter.samhsa.gov. This article is reprinted from SAMHSA News.