



Yavapai County Substance Abuse Coalition

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ALERT: Synthetic Marijuana - Spice (K2) Fact Sheet

Marketed as incense. Spice/K2 is a legal substance marketed since 2006 as a dried, herbal blend for use as incense. However, people are smoking the incense because it produces a high similar to marijuana, but of longer duration. The incense is sprayed with JWH-018, a synthetic THC, before it is packaged for sale. This spray is reportedly an "analgesic chemical which acts as a cannabinoid."

More potent than marijuana. Depending on synthetic compound in specific commercial brand, can be anywhere from 4 times to over 100 times more potent than regular marijuana (THC).

Not for human consumption. Spice is sold in smoke shops and head shops in a variety of colors/flavors-usually sold in foil packaging or in small glass containers. It is sold as incense and marked "not for human consumption". The average cost is \$30.00 a gram, more expensive than marijuana.

Most likely users:

- 14-27 yr. olds
- Prisoners/probationers
- Military (use now banned by all military branches)

Significant health risks. Spice is causing a significant health risk. Spice/K2 is often contaminated with unidentified toxic substances which contribute to various adverse health effects (also cause hallucinogenic effects similar to effects of PCP). Symptoms/side-effects may include:

- mimics marijuana "high" (often induced more quickly/more intense than "real" marijuana)
- hallucinations
- seizures/tremors
- coma/unconsciousness
- vomiting
- numbness/tingling
- increased respiration rate
- elevated blood pressure (reported up to 200/100-medically dangerous)
- elevated heart rate (reported up to rate of 150-medically dangerous)
- increased level of anxiety/agitation leading to panic attacks (possible suicide attempts)
- All effects of K2/Spice drugs may not be known for a very long time because of long time period that body stores them.

Contain possible cancer-causing agents. JWH-018 & many of its "cousins" such as HU-210/211, JWH-073 & CP 47/497 found in these drugs have a chemical structure shared with known cancer-causing agents.

Developed for research, never tested on humans. Spice/K2 was developed by Dr. John W. Huffman, a Clemson University professor, as part of research for the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) on endogenous cannabinoid receptors-but never tested on humans nor approved by the FDA. Dr. Huffman said in an interview to WebMD, "It is like Russian roulette to use these drugs. We don't know a darn thing about them for real. It shouldn't be out there."

Marketed under various names. It is marketed under a variety of names including K2, Spice, Pep Spice, Spice Silver, Spice Gold, Spice Diamond, Smoke, Skunk, Yucatan Fire, Genie & Zohai Orange Dragon Smoke, Black Mamba, Blaze, Red X, and Dawn.

Not just smoked. Spice is most often smoked but can be mixed in with food or drink.

State and International bans already in place. K2 has been banned in many countries. The following states have banned spice: Kentucky, Illinois, Georgia, Missouri, Tennessee, Utah, Mississippi, Tennessee, Hawaii, Oregon, Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Michigan, Louisiana, Virginia and North Dakota, primarily through state legislation. New York, Texas, and New Jersey are considering legislation.