

ALERT!

Spice



SPICE AND “K2” are common brand names for a mixture of herbs and spices that is typically sprayed with a synthetic compound chemically similar to THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. The chemical compounds typically include HU-210, HU-211, JWH-018, and JWH-073.

“Spice” is commonly purchased in head shops, tobacco shops, various retail outlets, and over the internet. It is often marketed as incense or synthetic marijuana (aka “fake weed”). Purchasing Spice over the internet can be dangerous because it is not usually known where the products come from or what amount of chemical is on the organic material.

Some common brands and/or street names for synthetic marijuana include: *Spice, Bliss, Yucatan Fire, Black Diamond, Black Mamba, Bombay Blue, Fake Weed, Genie, K2, Train Wreck, Blaze, Kind, Zohai* and *Red X Dawn*.

Spice, K2, and other brands of synthetic marijuana are typically packaged and sold in small, silvery plastic bags. The bags contain dried leaves or other organic materials covered or soaked in chemicals. Synthetic mari-

juana is usually marketed as incense that can be smoked. Its appearance is said to resemble potpourri. Synthetic marijuana products are usually smoked in joints or pipes, but some users make it into a tea.

The psychological effects from the use of Spice are similar to those of marijuana and include paranoia, panic attacks, and giddiness. Physiological effects of synthetic marijuana include increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, hallucinations, anxiety, vomiting, and seizures. The chemical compounds in synthetic marijuana appear to be stored in the body for long periods of time, and therefore the long-term effects on humans are not fully known.

Laws governing the legality of synthetic marijuana and the “active” ingredients it contains are rapidly changing. As Spice has grown in popularity over the last two years and gained notoriety amongst the general public, pressure has grown in the United States to regulate or outlaw the chemical compounds in the drug. Some states and cities across the country have already banned the use of these products, as has the U.S. military. In some European coun-

tries they have also been banned or made illegal.

Federal authorities plan to temporarily ban common chemicals found in synthetic marijuana as early as January 2011. This ban will put synthetic marijuana in the same category as other illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine.

The identity and location of synthetic marijuana manufacturers is often unknown. Manufacturers of these products are not regulated and these products are often purchased via the internet. Several websites that sell the product are based in China. Some products may contain an herb called damiana, which is native to Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. ☹

REFERENCES

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