

K2/Spice “Synthetic Cannabinoids”



- Synthetic cannabinoids are man-made chemicals that are sprayed onto plant material.
- They are commonly marketed as potpourri or incense to make it easier to sell.
- These substances are unpredictable and unregulated.
- It is possible to overdose on synthetic cannabinoids and there is no antidote.

What Are Synthetic Cannabinoids?

Synthetic cannabinoids are manufactured drugs designed to mimic the psychoactive effects of *Tetrahydrocannabinol* (THC). The drugs are not organic and are made in labs with mixtures of chemicals. There is no medical usage for this substance.

These products are commonly marketed under the guise of being “herbal incense” or potpourri. They can be found at smoke shops, gas stations, convenience stores, and online.

The products are typically labeled “not for human consumption.” This tactic is used primarily to protect manufacturers and sellers from legal responsibility. This marketing is also a means to increase the accessibility of synthetic cannabinoids.

What Are Common Street Names?

Spice, K2, Black Mamba, Ninja, Dream, Genie, Smoke, Skunk, Scooby Snax, and Crazy Clown.

Where Do They Come From?

Most synthetic cannabinoids are manufactured internationally and then shipped into the United States, usually via smuggling, to be sold.

These drugs have no medical usage, and their manufacturing does not follow FDA safety standards. There is no way to know if the chemicals are pure, or how much of these chemicals are present in a given sample of these drugs.

What Do They Look Like?

The chemicals typically come in powdered form before being dissolved into a solvent. Acetone, the primary ingredient in nail polish remover, is commonly used. It is then sprayed onto dried plant materials. This can be dry marijuana, or other plants. The mixture may also be put into vaping devices.



DEA.gov

Examples of K2/Spice & its packaging



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800.232.4424 (phone)
www.ctclearinghouse.org

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness

How Are They Used?

The synthetic drugs are commonly sprayed onto plant material and then smoked, typically in a pipe or rolled into a cigarette. Some people mix the dried plant material with water and drink it like a tea. Liquid cannabinoids have also been designed to be compatible with vaping devices.

What Are the Effects on the Brain?

The effects of synthetic cannabinoids can be similar to those of marijuana, such as elevated mood, relaxation, and altered perception.

However, these substances are associated with acute psychotic episodes. Which can include:

- Confusion
- Extreme anxiety
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations
- Violent behavior
- Suicidal thoughts

What Are the Effects on the Body?

There are many negative health effects associated with synthetic cannabinoids, such as:

- Elevated heart rate
- Elevated blood pressure
- Vomiting
- Tingling
- Numbness
- Tremors
- Seizures
- Unconsciousness

Can Misuse of these Synthetic Cannabinoids Lead to a Substance Use Disorder?

Yes, synthetic cannabinoids can lead to a substance use disorder. Individuals who continue to use these products over a period of time can develop a chemical dependence, leading to physical symptoms when they try to stop using them. These symptoms can include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Irritability
- Headaches

Can a Person Overdose on Synthetic Cannabinoids?

Yes, an individual can overdose on synthetic cannabinoids.

Use of these substances can lead to toxicity, reduced blood supply to the heart, kidney damage, and death. There is no medication to reverse an overdose caused by these substances.

Healthcare professionals can try to manage the symptoms of the overdose, but cannot stop it entirely.

Overdoses can also happen when street dealers mix, synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, into the packaged products without the user knowing.

Connecticut Resources

**CT Department of Mental Health and
Addiction Services**
www.ct.gov/DMHAS

Drug Free CT
<https://www.drugfreect.org/>

Be In The Know CT
<https://beintheknowct.org/>

24/7 Access Line
1.800.563.4086

2-1-1 of Connecticut
www.211ct.org or call 2-1-1

National Resources

**Substance Abuse and Mental
Health Services Administration**
www.samhsa.gov

**National Institute on
Drug Abuse (NIDA)**
www.nida.nih.gov



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