



Embalming Fluid

*Illy * Fry * Wet*

With an increasing use of marijuana among adolescents, it is not surprising that there also has been an increase in the use of other illicit drugs by adolescents. Among these other drugs are marijuana joints dipped in embalming fluid and laced with phencyclidine (PCP). Basically, a marijuana joint is dipped in formaldehyde and ethyl alcohol (the main ingredients of embalming fluid), and PCP is added to enhance marijuana's effects, increasing the risks of harmful reactions.

Embalming fluid is usually associated with morgues and funeral homes; however, the drug also can be purchased directly from chemical companies. Most drug users do not know that embalming fluid found on the street contains PCP, so they have no idea what they are consuming. PCP is not a normal component of embalming fluid but is added before the embalming fluid is distributed on the street. Finding embalming fluid to buy on the street is not easy because most street drug dealers make more money selling individual joints soaked with embalming fluid for about \$10 to \$20. However, if found on the street to purchase, a two-ounce sample of embalming fluid costs about \$50. Dealers obtain embalming fluid from other distributors, mostly people who work in hospitals, government morgues, or funeral homes. Some stores sell it to people without asking for any type of identification, because it can be used for other purposes such as a nail strengthening agent.

The percentage of formaldehyde found in embalming fluid ranges anywhere from 5 to

29 percent. The percentage of ethyl alcohol, the psychoactive ingredient found in alcoholic beverages, varies anywhere from 9 to 56 percent. Methanol and other solvents are also found in embalming fluid. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, it is common for marijuana to be laced with PCP or embalming fluid, both of which produce a hallucinogenic effect (psychedelic apparitions or feelings of euphoria or rage). They taste like rubbing alcohol and smell like gasoline, so why do many teens still want to smoke marijuana joints treated in embalming fluid and laced with PCP? Because they burn more slowly than marijuana joints that are not treated, there is an increased chance of a prolonged high. Although this treatment of marijuana is thought of as an emerging drug trend, its use actually has been around since the 1970s.

Slang words for marijuana joints dipped in embalming fluid and laced with PCP:

*Amp * Clickem * Crazy Eddie * Drank
Fry * Fry Sweet * Ill * Illy * Milk
Purple Rain * Wack * Water-Water
Wet * Wet-Wet * Wetdaddy*

Marijuana combined with embalming fluid and PCP can have the following effects:

Short-term Effects:

- Anger and frustration
- Depression
- Hallucinations and delusions
- Headache
- Impaired vision and coordination

- Increase in women's sexual appetites
- Loss of consciousness
- Memory loss
- Paranoia
- Physical violence
- Sleepiness
- Vomiting

Long-term Effects:

- Brain damage
- Bronchitis
- Coma
- Convulsions
- Coughing
- Destruction of muscle tissue
- Fever
- Heart attack
- High blood pressure
- Inflammation of the throat, nose, and esophagus
- Kidney damage
- Lung damage
- Maturation process cessation
- Pneumonia
- Spinal cord destruction

Education and awareness about this drug trend is vital to the public, whether to inform parents, caregivers, or teens about the dangerous additive in some marijuana joints, or to warn current marijuana users about the increased immediate and harmful effects.

If you are concerned that someone you know might be using marijuana dipped in embalming fluid and laced with PCP, **some warning signs that you should look out for are:**

- ◆ **Unreasonable anger and frustration**
- ◆ **Depression**
- ◆ **Physical violence**
- ◆ **Sleepiness**

Information Provided By:
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)
07/2002