



FAST FACTS

A message for health care providers



Substance Abuse Alert: Synthetic Cannabinoids

What are they?

- Plant material coated by chemicals that mimic marijuana.
- Often used by teens and young adults to mimic the effects of marijuana.

How are they taken?

- Smoking (using a pipe, a water pipe, or rolling the drug-spiked plant material in cigarette papers) is most common.

What are the health effects on the user?

- Users report highs that last 30 minutes to 2 hours and may describe out-of-body experiences.
- The most common symptoms reported include:
 - tachycardia
 - paranoid behavior, agitation/irritability
 - nausea and vomiting
- Severe adverse effects, including death, acute renal failure, and other cardiovascular and central nervous systems effects, have been linked to use of these products.
- It is important to note that these products are not detected on a urine drug screen.

How are they marketed?

- The products are marketed as “legal” and sold as incense, herbal mixtures or potpourri, online and in convenience or smoke shops.
- They often carry a “not for human consumption” label in order to disguise the true purpose of the substance.
- Various formulations are being sold under names such as: K2, Spice, Blonde, Summit, Standard, Blaze, Red Dawn X, and Citron.

Is this an emerging drug abuse issue?

- Calls to New York State Poison Control Centers have increased dramatically in 2012.

What is the legal status of these compounds in NYS?

- Effective March 29, 2012, New York State Health Commissioner, Nirav R. Shah, MD, MPH, issued an order of summary action banning the sale of synthetic marijuana products in New York State.
- On March 1, 2012 the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) extended the temporary scheduling of five synthetic cannabinoids into Schedule I drugs of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA).

Resources:

- Poison Control Center: (800) 222-1222
- Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement: (866) 811-7957
- To alert the DEA about retailers selling these products, call 1-877-883-5789
- DEA Website: http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/fed_regs/rules/2012/fr0301_3.htm