

# **Synthetic Drugs: "Bath Salts," K2/Spice**






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**A guide for parents and  
other influencers**



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Where families find answers

<p><b>Synthetic Drugs: "Bath Salts," K2/Spice</b></p> 	<p>Hello, and welcome to our parents guide that addresses issues pertaining to synthetic drugs such as "Bath Salts" and K2/Spice.</p> <p>This is a very important topic to address because synthetic drugs <b>are</b> dangerous. They are not 'safe' as a second choice, or as an alternative to more well-known drugs, for your kids, and you must communicate that fact with them. This presentation will help provide you with the information and resources to have that discussion.</p>
<p><b>"Bath Salts" Are Not Bath Salts</b></p>  	<p>The first thing that parents should know is that the drug called "Bath Salts" is very different from the product that you put into a bath. The only reason why they have the same name is because the products look similar like a fine powder.</p>
<p><b>What Are "Bath Salts?"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stimulants: Manmade chemicals related to amphetamines (speed)</li> <li>• Substituted cathinones -- Methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV) and mephedrone, and methylone are the chemicals most often found in "bath salts"</li> <li>• Consumed orally or nasally</li> </ul>  	<p>So – what are "Bath Salts" anyway? They are a man-made, chemical (as opposed to organic) stimulant drug. Generally, stimulants are a class of drugs that elevate mood, increase feelings of well-being and increase energy and alertness. Amphetamines, or speed, are an example of stimulant drugs.</p> <p>The technical term for "Bath Salts" is "substituted cathinone." Now, what does that mean? You may have heard of Khat, a plant that is cultivated and used in East Africa and the Middle East. It has a stimulant effect on the user and can be quite dangerous. Substituted cathinones are synthetic, concentrated versions of the stimulant chemical in Khat. Methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV), mephedrone and methylone are the chemicals most often found in "Bath Salts."</p> <p>They can be ingested orally or snorted through the nose.</p>

### How Can You Tell?



If it says it is "Not For Human Consumption"

Or it is not illegal

Or it is only for 18+ Adults Only

***It is probably for ingestion, not a hot bath***



### Many Brands and Names and Not Always Sold as "Bath Salts"



So – how can you tell if something that is labeled as a "bath salt" is really a drug?

Well, first off, if it is contained in a packet that is about the size of a moist towelette, it probably isn't designed for use in a bathtub that can hold anywhere from 30 to 60 gallons of water.

But if it also says, "not for human consumption," says that it is "not illegal" (never a good sign) or that it is for "adults only," it is probably a drug that was created for ingestion and not for a hot bath.

What makes this even trickier is that not all "Bath Salts" are marketed as Bath Salts.

Substituted cathinones and related drugs have been sold as plant feeder, insect repellent and even stain remover.

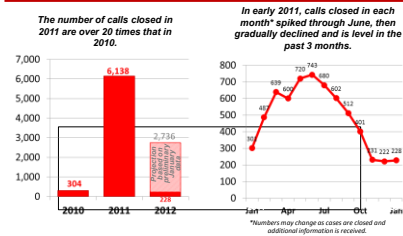
It is also important to note that there is no standard formulation for these drugs. The composition of chemicals that is sold in one packet may be completely different than what is sold in an identical packet.

So – why all of the mystery?

It is because when these drugs were legal, the people trying to sell them were working to exploit very specific loopholes in the law. For a period of time, these drugs were not illegal because the law did not include them. That has changed, and we will talk about that in a moment. But once word went out that "Bath Salts" were dangerous, the distributors of these drugs put them in new, deceiving packages.

<div> <h3>Why Do Teens Use "Bath Salts?"</h3> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For energy / alternative to illegal stimulants</li> <li>• Perceived to be legal</li> <li>• Not picked up on standard drug tests</li> <li>• Available at retail outlets: convenience stores; head shops; online</li> </ul> </div> <div> </div>	<p>So why would a teen or young adult, or anyone for that matter, make a decision to use "Bath Salts?"</p> <p>First, we'll look at some of the same reasons why people use stimulants. For some, it is to get high or escape, but for many others it is to get energy or endurance to make it through the day. Many people – not just teens – feel overworked and overstressed, and in those situations, a stimulant can have a lot of appeal.</p> <p>Peer pressure or curiosity can play a large role, and often teens don't know what the effects will be until it's too late. Word of mouth can also play a big part in deciding to try it.</p> <p>Anecdotally, potential users may think that "Bath Salts" are safer than methamphetamine. They may perceive them to be legal. They may think that they would not test positive – at work or at school – if they use it.</p> <p>And these drugs are readily available – if you walk into some convenience stores or gas stations, you may see a whole display of pills and packages marked as "vitamins" or "energy boosters." Some may be legal, and some may not be. Head shops – which are in the business of selling drug paraphernalia just within the limits of the law – may sell these drugs, and a search for "Bath Salts" online yields more than 1.3 million results.</p>
<div> <h3>Effects of "Bath Salts?"</h3> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very severe paranoia that sometimes causes users to harm themselves or others.</li> <li>• Speed of onset – 15 minutes; Length of high – 4-6 hours</li> <li>• Long term effects: Unknown</li> <li>• Effects reported to Poison Control Centers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Suicidal thoughts</li> <li>– Agitation; Combative/Violent; Confusion</li> <li>– Hallucinations / psychosis</li> <li>– Increased heart rate; Hypertension; Chest Pain</li> <li>– Death or serious injury</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </div> <div> <p>Source: American Association of Poison Control Centers</p> </div> <div> </div>	<p>The effects of "Bath Salts" can be severe.</p> <p>Very severe paranoia can sometimes cause users to harm themselves or others. Effects reported to Poison Control Centers include:</p> <p>Suicidal thoughts  Agitation  Combative/Violent behavior  Confusion  Hallucinations/psychosis  Increased heart rate  Hypertension  Chest Pain  Death or serious injury</p> <p>The speed of onset is 15 minutes, while the length of the high from these drugs is four to six hours.</p> <p>It is especially troubling that the long-term effects of the drug are unknown, because the drug has only been used widely within the past decade. We don't know what the future will hold or exactly how people will be affected.</p>

### Calls To Poison Control Centers for Human Exposure to "Bath Salts," 2010 to January 2012



Poison centers first raised the alarm about "Bath Salts" in December 2010 after they started receiving calls about people having serious reactions to the chemicals, such as increased blood pressure and heart rate, agitation, hallucinations, extreme paranoia and delusions. In 2010, poison centers received 304 calls about exposures to "Bath Salts." That number rose dramatically in 2011 when poison centers received 6,138 calls. In early 2011, calls closed in each month\* spiked through June, then gradually declined and was level in November and December 2011 and January 2012. While this is notable progress, projections based on January 2012 data indicate that use will remain far above 2010 levels in 2012.

### Synthetic Marijuana, K2 / "Spice"



#### Synthetic Marijuana




- K2 or "Spice" are common names for synthetic marijuana, *however, the effects of synthetic marijuana can be very different from cultivated marijuana*
- K2 or "Spice" is a mixture of herbs or dried, shredded plant material that is typically sprayed with chemicals that are similar to THC, the psychoactive ingredients in marijuana.
- Street names:** Bliss, Black Mamba, Bombay Blue, Blaze, Genie, Spice, Zohai, JWH -018, -073, -250



"K2" and "Spice" are street names for synthetic marijuana. Whatever perceptions people have of marijuana, they should not underestimate the risk of this drug or make the mistake that synthetic marijuana is somehow less dangerous than cultivated marijuana.

K2 or Spice is a mixture of herbs or other plant materials that have been sprayed with artificial chemicals that are supposed to mimic the effects of THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. One group of these artificial chemicals has the prefix "JWH," so you will see JWH-018, JWH-073 and others. It is important to note that K2/Spice is completely synthetic, so while these drugs may act on the same parts of the brain and body as THC, the effects can be very different.

In addition to the most common names, K2 and Spice, this product is sold under a number of trade names such as "Blaze," "Bliss," "Black Mamba," "Bombay Blue," "Genie" or by the names of the chemicals that are used in the production process such as JWH-018.

<p><b>Signs of Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong clove smell</li> <li>• Coffee grinder – finer the powder, easier to smoke</li> <li>• Drug paraphernalia (pipes, screens, etc.)</li> <li>• Typically smoked</li> </ul> <p><small>Source: Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan</small></p> 	<p>One of the signs that parents can look for is a strong clove smell. K2/Spice is typically smoked, so parents may find a coffee grinder around the house – which is often used to reduce the product to a fine powder so that it is easier to smoke – and other drug paraphernalia such as pipes or screens.</p>
<p><b>Physical Signs of Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of control</li> <li>• Lack of pain response</li> <li>• Increased agitation</li> <li>• Pale skin</li> <li>• Seizures</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> <li>• Profuse sweating</li> <li>• Uncontrolled / spastic body movements</li> <li>• Elevated blood pressure, heart rate, and palpitations</li> </ul> <p><small>Source: Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan</small></p> 	<p>The physical signs of use are very troubling.</p> <p>You may notice increased agitation, profuse sweating, pale skin or vomiting.</p> <p>But what may be of the greatest concern is the loss of physical control – a kind of brain-body disconnect. This is where you may see seizures, a lack of pain response or uncontrolled/spastic body movements.</p>
<p><b>Effects of Synthetic Marijuana</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onset – 3-5 minutes</li> <li>• Length of duration – 1-8 hours</li> <li>• Short-term effects: In addition to physical signs of use, users may experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dysphoria – the opposite of euphoria</li> <li>– Paranoia – similar to PCP / Angel Dust</li> <li>– Delusions, hallucinations and increased agitation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Long-term effects: <b>Unknown</b></li> </ul> <p><small>Source: Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan</small></p> 	<p>Looking at the effects another way, parents should know that the onset of this drug is fairly quick, and – depending on a number of factors – the length of the high can last from one to eight hours.</p> <p>The paranoia that is associated with K2/Spice is closer to the psychological reaction to PCP or angel dust than to the paranoia associated with marijuana.</p> <p>One of the most frightening factors is that users may experience dysphoria. The best way to explain dysphoria is that it is the opposite of euphoria. A spice user posted a blog comment that read in part, “I felt as if I was in hell – this morbid place that I couldn’t get out of.”</p>
	<p>As troubling as the short-term effects of this drug are, what is even more concerning is the fact that no one knows what their long-term effects will be. They simply haven’t been around long enough for medical professionals to know how users will be affected in 10 years, 20 years or even further in the future.</p>

## How is K2 obtained?

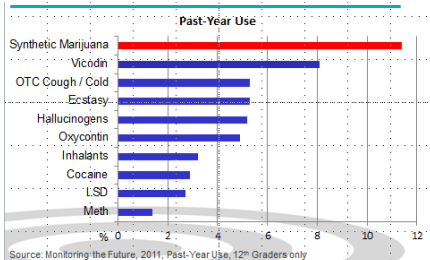
- K2 is typically sold in small, silvery plastic bags of dried leaves and marketed as incense that can be smoked. It is said to resemble potpourri.
- K2 is sold online, in convenience stores and in "head" shops, and is usually marketed as incense.



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Like "Bath Salts," K2/Spice is sold online, in convenience stores and in "head" shops. It is often marketed as incense.

## K2 / Spice Use

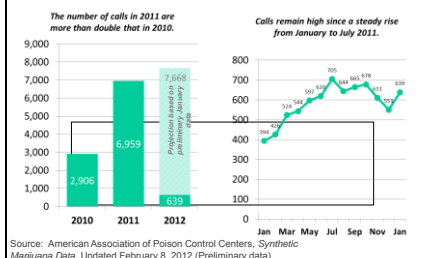


While these drugs may be "news" to many parents, more than one in 10 American high school seniors used synthetic marijuana in the prior year according to the "Monitoring the Future" study, a survey conducted by the University of Michigan,.

At 11.4 percent, the annual prevalence of synthetic marijuana is:  
 41 percent greater than Vicodin (8.1 percent)  
 Four times greater than inhalants (3.2 percent)  
 Four times greater than cocaine (2.9 percent)  
 Eight times greater than meth (1.4 percent)

It is also more common than hallucinogens, LSD and OxyContin and twice as likely to be used as over-the-counter cough/cold medicine.

## Calls Received by Poison Control Centers for Human Exposure to Synthetic Marijuana, 2010 to January 2012



Calls to poison control centers for exposure to synthetic marijuana doubled between 2010 and 2011 and is on track to rise again in 2012.

<div> <h3>DEA Takes Action</h3> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On November 24, 2010, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) took emergency action to temporarily control five chemicals used to make K2 and other "fake pot" products.</li> <li>On September 7, 2011, the DEA banned three of the drugs found in bath salts</li> <li><del>Possessing and selling these chemicals or the products that contain is now illegal in the U.S.</del></li> <li>The DEA will study these chemicals to determine if these products should be permanently controlled.</li> <li><del>Congress is also working to act on this issue</del></li> <li>Regulators face the challenge of staying ahead of formulations</li> </ul> </div> <div> </div>	<p>In the past two years, the Drug Enforcement Administration has taken emergency action to make both "Bath Salts" and K2/Spice illegal. There is now a study period taking place to determine if these bans will remain permanent.</p> <p>The challenge for regulators and parents, however, is to stay ahead of the new formulas and versions of these drugs that may not be covered by current law.</p> <p>Congress is also working to act on this issue.</p> <p>However, regulators and parents face the challenge of staying ahead of new formulations.</p>
<div> <h3>Messages Parents Can Deliver</h3> </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is impossible to know what these drugs contain, or who made them, or what you are going to get.</li> <li>Getting high – no matter how – carries risks of making unsafe or unhealthy decisions</li> <li><del>Just because a drug is legal – or is labeled as legal – does not mean that it is safe</del></li> <li><del>We don't know the long term effects of synthetic drugs because the drugs are so new</del></li> </ul> </div> <div> </div>	<p>So what can parents and other influencers say to young people about the dangers of these drugs?</p> <p>A good overarching message to kids is to avoid putting anything in their bodies that would change their feelings or emotions – whether it is something they would smoke, drink, take in pill form or shoot with a needle. The human brain is an incredible machine, and you need to be even more careful with a teenage brain because it is a work in progress.</p> <p>Additional messages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is impossible to know what these drugs contain, who made them or what you are going to get.</li> <li>Getting high – no matter how – carries risks of making unsafe or unhealthy decisions.</li> <li>Just because a drug is legal – or is labeled as legal – does not mean that it is safe.</li> <li>We don't know the long-term effects of synthetic drugs because the drugs are so new.</li> </ul>