



# CONSUMER NEWS

## SAN DIEGO CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

May 2015

### IT'S HERE: BEWARE SYNTHETIC DRUGS

**PARENTS: HELP YOUR  
TEEN OR YOUNG ADULT  
JUST SAY NO TO THE  
NEW CHEMICAL  
RUSSIAN ROULETTE**

Synthetic drugs may include “Spice”, “bath salts” as well as mixtures of drugs with synthetic substances (for instance “Molly”). People may try getting high with these substances because they think they may be able to evade detection. Tests that look for THC and other controlled substances in urine may not pick up the presence of other drugs. Synthetics are slightly different enough from already listed illegal drugs that they may not be detectible in urine, that is, not until authorities test for these newer substances. But getting high as a guinea pig can be a dangerous game of chemical Russian roulette.

An Oceanside smoke shop that was illegally selling Spice has agreed to pay over \$23,500 in civil penalties and submit to an injunction. Meanwhile another case was filed to enjoin the illegal sale of Spice in Imperial Beach. Authorities are cracking down on the sale of synthetic cannabinoids throughout San Diego County.

Synthetic drugs first appeared in the United States around 2008-2009 and have exploded in popularity, especially among teens. Parents should be aware to talk to their teens about these dangerous drugs.

**DANGERS  
OF SYNTHETICS:**

- 1) Not regulated by FDA.
- 2) Not labeled for human consumption.
- 3) You do not need to be a “drug abuser” to be in danger. **Even if your child tries a synthetic just once - the results can be fatal.**

UT-San Diego recently reported that, “it’s a **chemical Russian roulette**...Users have either died

or been seriously injured. Sometimes people don’t know what they’re getting...not even the drug dealers know.” (Feb. 13, 2015, “Autopsies Turn Up 6 New Synthetic Drugs.”)

**PARENTS: What to look for?**

SPICE	cannabinoids to mimic marijuana	May look like plant material
BATH SALTS <sup>1</sup>	Synthetic stimulant compounds - cathinone	May look like “bath salts” crystals or powder
MOLLY	MDMA-Ectasy, mixed with unknown synthetics	May look like a pill, powder

Brand names for Spice may include: Mr. Nice Guy, California Dreams, Scooby Snax, Green Buddah, 24K and Nuclear Bomb, K2, Blaze, Red X Dawn.

Bath salts may also be marketed as “plant food”, “jewelry cleaner” or “phone screen cleaner”— sold online and in stores under brand names such as “Ivory Wave,” “Bloom,” “Cloud Nine,” “Lunar Wave,” “Vanilla Sky,” “White Lightning,” and “Scarface.”

<sup>1</sup> Note: Epsom salts are really bath salts. “Bath salts” that are synthetic designer drugs are not used for bathing. They are bath salts “in name only.”

Since January 2012, selling synthetic cannabinoid compounds — psychoactive bath salts and certain herbal incenses — have been illegal in California. Still, a number of stores and smoke shops have continued to sell them despite the new law, authorities say.

These substances are shipped from overseas from unknown facilities to the United States with labels saying, "not for human consumption." These labels, according to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, hide the real purpose of the drugs – to evade FDA oversight.

Spice users who have been taken to Poison Control Centers report symptoms that include **rapid heart rate, vomiting, agitation, confusion, and hallucinations.** Spice can also **raise blood pressure** and cause **reduced blood supply to the heart** (myocardial ischemia),



and has been associated with **heart attacks.** Much of this is **similar for bath salts** which also may cause **paranoia, delirium, panic attacks.** A study at the Naval Medical Center, San Diego announced by the American Psychiatric Association also found synthetic cannabis (Spice) to be linked to **extended psychosis** lasting three months or longer.

Lance Dyer, whose child Dakota died at 14 after just a

**one-time use of synthetic cannabinoids,** started the Dakota Foundation to raise awareness of these dangers.

***“It only takes...***

***1***

***bad teenage experiment to end your child’s life.”***

*-Lance Dyer, father of Dakota, age 14, who died after one-time use of synthetic “marijuana”*

“Be proactive in your child’s life, when it comes to synthetic drugs, educate yourself then your child about the deadly effects of these poisons... Become informed and aware, monitor your children’s Internet access, text messaging, Snapchats and Instagrams. Do not think for one second ...”my child would never do that.”” (CNN, Dec. 2, 2014).

**MORE INFORMATION:**

National Institute on Drug Abuse, December 2012  
“Spice”

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/k2spice-synthetic-marijuana>  
“Bath Salts”:

<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/synthetic-cathinones-bath-salts>

National News:

- <http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/01/us/synthetic-drugs-parents/>
- <http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/13/health/synthetic-drugs-7-things/>
- <http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/22/health/9-things-molly-drug/>

Local News:

- <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2015/feb/13/drugs-fatalities-fentanyl-warning-synthetic-salts/>

Media Release – DA Obtains Civil Penalty Against Retailer Selling Illegal Synthetic Drug  
<http://www.sdcda.org/files/Spice%20Civil%20Judgement%20News%20Release%206-1-2015.pdf>



**LEGAL CONSEQUENCES FOR POSSESSION AND DEALING SYNTHETICS:**

Dealing or selling synthetic stimulant compounds (i.e. bath salts) is a misdemeanor and possession is an infraction. (See Health and Safety Code section 11375.5). At the federal level, synthetic substances may be banned on an emergency, temporary basis or permanently, or may be treated as an analogue of the controlled substance they mimic (Controlled Substances Analogue Enforcement Act of 1986). Penalties may therefore exceed misdemeanors.

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**San Diego  
City Attorney’s Office  
Consumer and Environmental  
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This newsletter was compiled by Alison Schlick

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