

K2 or "Spice"

What is K2?

K2 is a legal substance marketed since 2006 as a dried herbal blend for use as incense, marked 'not for human consumption.' However, people are smoking the incense because it produces a high similar to marijuana, but of longer duration. The incense is sprayed with JWH-018 before it is packaged for sale. This spray is reportedly an "analgesic chemical which acts as a cannabinoid." Other reports of the spray being a potent psychotropic drug, often contaminated with unidentified toxic substances which contribute to various adverse health effects (also cause hallucinogenic effects.)



Depending on synthetic compound in specific commercial brand, can be anywhere from 4 times to over 100 times more potent than regular marijuana (THC.) Most often it is smoked but can be mixed in with food or drink.

What are other names for this substance?

Spice, Pep Spice, Spice Sliver, Spice gold, Spice Diamond, Smoke, Sence, Skunk, Yucatan Fire, Orange Dragon Smoke, Black Mamba, Genie, Blaze, Red X Dawn, and Zohai. Sold in a variety of colors/flavors, usually in foil packaging.

What are the symptoms of using K2?

It mimics marijuana 'high', often induced more quickly/more intense than 'real' marijuana. Symptoms of using this synthetic drug include hallucinations, severe agitation, dangerously elevated heart rate (reported up to rate of 150) and blood pressure (reported up to 200/100), increased respiration rate, panic attacks, dilated pupils, numbness/tingling, very pale skin, vomiting and, in some cases, tremors, seizures, coma/unconsciousness. Many individuals stop using the drug because after a week or so of using it they start getting really bad headaches.

Is K2 dangerous?

K2 can be very dangerous because nothing is known about the toxicity of JWH-018. Directly on the packaging, it states, "Not for human consumption."

Why is K2 so popular?

- It is legal
- It does not show up on drug screens, unless used within the prior two hours
- It is easily available on the internet and tobacco shops, 'head' shops or convenience stores
- It is advertised on local radio stations
- It is believed to be natural, and therefore safe
- It sells for approximately \$30 to \$40 per three gram bag (about equal to 3 sugar packets), which is comparable in cost to marijuana.

Where did it come from?

- Developed by Dr. John W. Huffman, a Clemson University professor, as part of research for National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) on endogenous cannabinoid receptors, but never tested on humans nor approved by FDA
- JWH-018 and many of its 'cousins' such as HU-210/211, JWH-073 and CP 47/4497 found in these drugs have a chemical structure shared with known cancer-causing agents
- All effects of K2/Spice many not be known for a long time because of long time period that body stores them

- So far nothing is known about metabolism of the chemical compounds in K2/Spice drugs, some may be toxic and/or pharmacologically active, differing from batch to batch in kind/amount of applied drugs (synthetic) thus resulting in higher risk of accidental overdosing which has already been seen and is on the rise with these drugs with increase numbers of ER and hospital incidents reported

Has K2 been banned in other places?

K2 has been banned in Britain, Germany, Poland, South Korea, Russia and France internationally. Kansas was the first State in the U.S. to ban this substance, followed by Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Missouri, Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and in 2011 Illinois. There are other states are considering legislation, including Michigan, New York, Indiana, Ohio, Utah, North Dakota, and New Jersey (*in NJ, a bill was introduced in May, 2010.*)

What is being seen in hospitals and by law enforcement?

- Recently linked to over 352 nationwide emergency room incidents-includes suicide attempts, extremely elevated heart rate/blood pressure, comas, seizures, and anxiety attacks.
- Police in Indianola, Iowa report 18 yr old smoking K2 resulting in severe anxiety attack-stated was "going to hell" and went home and shot and killed his self.
- Dr. Anthony Scalzo (professor of toxicology at St. Louis University) indicates he's seen nearly 30 cases in past month involving teenagers experiencing hallucinations, severe agitation, elevated heart rate/blood pressure, vomiting and tremors/seizures as result of smoking K2.
- Dr. Scalzo says that what makes K2 (and other Spice derivatives) so dangerous is that its side effects suggest that it also affects the user's cardiovascular system, as well as the central nervous system.
- Causing difficulties for law enforcement agencies, including probation & parole, as well as drug courts due to difficulties in testing for presence, one lab test now known to detect it in system but at cost of \$50 and will probably not test positive for all the known variations.

What can I do?

- Discuss the dangers of K2 with tweens, teens and even adults who may be likely to use this substance.
- One sign of use that parents should look for is dried herbal residue in their children's rooms, as well as the foil packets in trash.
- Check out advertising at <http://www.dutchincense.com/>

(Information from facts sheets created by Sue Parr, the legislative/public policy director for CCOVA (Community Coalitions of VA) and the Bragg Hill Community Coalition's Drug Free Community Project Director; and from Janna Hocker, Community Consultant for the Governor's Commission for a Drug-Free Indiana; compiled and edited by Becky Carlson, Center for Prevention and Counseling, Newton, NJ.)