

**DRUG  
ENFORCEMENT  
ADMINISTRATION**



**WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT  
K2/Spice**

Spice or K2,  
also known as  
**Synthetic Marijuana**,  
is popular among  
youth.



DEA PHOTO

**What is it?**

Synthetic cannabinoids, also known as "Spice of K2" are chemicals synthesized in laboratories and mimic pharmacological effects of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the primary psychoactive ingredient in marijuana.

**Street names:** K2, Bliss, Black Mamba, Blaze, Bombay Blue, Legal Weed, Genie, Zohai, Red X Dawn, and many others.

**How is it abused?** It is commonly laced on plant material which is ingested by smoking. Users have been identified applying the liquid to hookahs (an instrument for vaporizing and smoking a given material whereby the smoke or vapor passes through a water basin prior to inhalation), vaporizers (also known as "vaping" or an "e-cigarette," which allows the user to administer a liquid to be aerosolized and then inhaled), and hookah pens (a type of vaporizer, often much smaller and intended for increased discretion while smoking).

**What is the effect of using Spice or K2?**

- Psychological effects include paranoia, anxiety, panic attacks, hallucinations and giddiness.
- It can cause an increase in heart rate and blood pressure, convulsions, organ damage, or death.
- Regular users of the drug may experience withdrawal and addiction problems.

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**Did you know?**

Many of the active chemicals in synthetic marijuana are illegal because of the high risk for abuse and little to no medical benefit.

Clandestinely made drugs have no manufacturing safety standards that are normally required by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Many of these synthetic drugs are made in foreign countries and then smuggled into the United States in bulk form or as finished product. *Source: <http://www.dea.gov/pr/speeckes-testimony/2013t092513t.pdf>*

Because these drugs are created in illegal and unregulated laboratories, their ingredients and strength are almost impossible for the user to know. Use of these drugs may lead to overdose and hospitalization.

In April 2015, New York state authorities issued a health alert following a dramatic spike in hospital visits for synthetic marijuana use. More than 160 patients in nine days were rushed to the hospital for adverse effects of synthetic cannabinoid “spice or K2” use.

Also in April 2015, recent surges of synthetic marijuana hospital admissions have also occurred in Alabama where it was reported that 98 overdoses cases were linked to synthetic marijuana use.

**– WARNING –  
THE INGREDIENTS AND STRENGTH OF PRODUCTS CONTAINING SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS ARE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE USER TO KNOW**

The American Association of Poison Control Centers stated in 2014 there were 3,677 calls to poison centers reference synthetic marijuana exposure. This is a 37.8% increase from 2013.

In 2014, synthetic cannabinoid use among 8th, 10th and 12th graders combined (annual use) was ranked third behind marijuana and amphetamine use.  
*Source: Monitoring the Future Study 2014.*

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For drug prevention information, visit DEA's websites:



**GetSmartAboutDrugs.com**  
*For parents, caregivers, and educators*

**JustThinkTwice.com**  
*For teens*

**dea.gov**