

Winter 2011

Synthetic Drugs

Study Drugs

Wisconsin Poison Center
www.wisconsinpoison.org

POISON
Help

1-800-222-1222

Synthetic Drugs – Dangerous and Deadly

One type is marketed as “synthetic marijuana.” The other is advertised as “fake cocaine” or “fake meth.” Both are marketed as legal equivalents to illegal drugs. But both cause alarming side effects that are generating a slew of calls to poison centers and spurring concern among doctors across the U.S.

America’s 57 poison centers first received calls about “synthetic marijuana” in late 2009. During 2010, they received 2,915 calls about these new products. And from January 1 to September 30 this year, they’ve received 5,083 calls. The synthetic marijuana products sell for between



Photo courtesy Bangor Police Department

\$30 and \$40 per 3-gram bag, in packages labeled as incense or potpourri and marketed under brand names like “Spice,” “K2,” “Genie,” “Yucatan Fire,” “Sence,” “Smoke,” “Skunk” and “Zohai.”

Late last year, poison centers began to receive calls about products marketed as “bath salts” sold both on the Internet as well as in gas stations and head shops. Packaging is usually a plastic bag filled with a white granular powder. The products are known as “Red Dove,” “Blue Silk,” “Zoom,” “Bloom,” “Cloud 9,” “Ocean Snow,” “Lunar Wave,” “Vanilla Sky,” “Ivory Wave,” “White Lightning,” “Scarface” and “Hurricane Charlie.” They produce increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, agitation, hallucinations, extreme paranoia and delusions. Poison centers took 303 calls about the products in 2010; between January 1 and Sept. 30, 2011, the number of calls had jumped to 5,226. Many states have responded to the rising use of bath salts by passing laws to make them illegal, and in September 2011, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration issued a ban of the chemicals used to make these dangerous drugs.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers wants you to be aware of the dangers of these products.

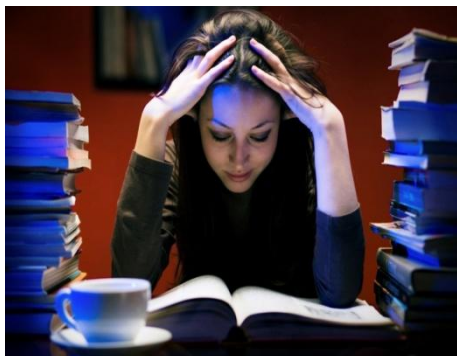


Here are a few tips on what they are and the dangers surrounding them:

- Parents of teens should be on the lookout for such products in their children’s bedrooms and backpacks. Be particularly skeptical of products labeled “incense” or “bath salts.”
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of drug use in loved ones: paranoia, changes in personality, agitation and anxiety are among the symptoms reported by users of these substances.
- Talk with family members about the dangers of these products. Don’t be fooled by the ready availability and legal status of new “designer drugs.” These products are not a “safe” or harmless alternative to other illicit drugs of abuse. Many can cause hallucinations and agitation that poison center experts say represent the opposite of a “mellow high.” In the case of bath salts, for example, poison center officials report instances of severe paranoia that has caused users to harm themselves and others.

Stay Away From Study Drugs

College can be papers, campus can make life times. And growth, their health if exams just
Poison Control



difficult. Peer pressure, tuition, professors, term activities and the desire for academic excellence for a college student quite overwhelming at although the college experience can bring about sometimes the pursuit of excellence can harm students add “study drugs” to the mix. th final around the corner, the American Association of Centers encourages parents to talk to their children about the dangers of popular study drugs and the symptoms they may cause.

Study drugs are drugs that are abused as study aids. Students often believe that study drugs enhance or focus concentration and increase stamina when they cram for tests or write lengthy papers.

The use of study drugs is not new. For years, college students have looked for ways to make studying easier, more efficient and more manageable. The drugs of choice are stimulants (uppers) and include:

- Caffeine: Historically, this has been limited to drinking multiple cups of coffee or tea to help students through all-nighters. The dose is increased considerably, however, by taking caffeine pills or consuming multiple energy drinks. Caffeine pills can contain up to 200 mg. of caffeine in each pill, two to three times the amount in a cup of coffee. Energy drinks also contain a large amount of caffeine, and some contain additional stimulants.



- Prescription medicines: Some students use ADHD medicine as a study drug. These medicines contain the stimulants dextroamphetamine or methylphenidate. For some people with undiagnosed or preexisting mental health issues, these prescription drugs can make their conditions worse. Chronic use also can lead to addiction. It's important for parents to remind their children to take their ADHD medicine correctly and never to take someone else's prescription drugs.

According to the medical experts at America's 57 poison centers, the following symptoms may indicate someone is abusing study drugs. Call your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222 if someone experiences:

- Anxiety, nervousness, jitters or agitation
- Tremors
- Increased heart rate
- Elevated blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Loss of appetite
- Upset stomach with nausea and vomiting

Keep your poison center's number near your phone: 1-800-222-1222. Remember: You can call your poison center to ask about these substances even if you have not been exposed to them. Poison centers are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and take both emergency and nonemergency calls.

