

## Why do people use synthetic marijuana?

- IT IS SEEN AS A "SAFE" ALTERNATIVE TO MARIJUANA BY TEENAGERS
- IT IS EASY TO BUY
- IT IS UNTRACEABLE IN DRUG SCREENS WITHIN TWO HOURS OF USE.

Some people who use synthetic cannabinoids may be looking to pass drug tests. Because standard drug testing only tests for THC found in plant-based marijuana, synthetic cannabinoid products do not trigger a positive result.

This appeals to active military personnel, professional athletes, people on parole, and people in treatment for substance misuse who were among the earliest reported users of these products.

Another group commonly using synthetic cannabinoids are those suffering from chaotic life situations, often homeless or low income. Synthetic cannabinoids became an affordable replacement to marijuana and other drugs.

People may also use synthetic cannabinoids when experimenting with other substances. They may not even be aware they are ingesting synthetic cannabinoids.

### WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE K2/SPICE?



## Synthetic Marijuana



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## What is synthetic marijuana and how is it used?

Synthetic cannabinoids are human-made mind-altering chemicals that are either sprayed on dried, shredded plant material so they can be smoked or sold as liquids to be vaporized and inhaled in e-cigarettes and other devices. These products are also known as herbal or liquid incense.

These chemicals are called cannabinoids because they are similar to chemicals found in the marijuana plant. Because of this similarity, synthetic cannabinoids are sometimes misleadingly called "synthetic marijuana" (or "fake weed"), and they are often marketed as safe, legal alternatives to that drug.

## What are other names for synthetic marijuana?

- K2
- Spice
- Joker
- Black Mamba
- Kush
- Kronik



## Is synthetic marijuana safe?

Synthetic marijuana is NOT safe. It may affect the brain much more powerfully than marijuana and their actual effects can be unpredictable and, in some cases, more dangerous or even life-threatening.

Synthetic cannabinoid products are often labeled "not for human consumption." Labels also often claim that they contain "natural" material taken from a variety of plants. However, the only parts of these products that are natural are the dried plant materials. Chemical tests show that the active, mind-altering ingredients are cannabinoid compounds made in laboratories.

Easy access and the belief that synthetic cannabinoid products are "natural" and therefore harmless, have likely contributed to their use among young people. Another reason for their continued use is that standard drug tests cannot easily detect many of the chemicals used in these products.

## What are the side effects of synthetic marijuana?

There are a range of different side effects.

- Seizures
- Elevated blood pressure
- Elevated mood
- Extreme anxiety
- Confusion
- Vomiting
- Agitation
- Heart attacks
- Kidney failure
- Bleeding complications (spontaneous nose bleeds, bleeding from the gums, people vomiting blood, blood in the stool and urine, and an abnormal amount of menstrual bleeding.)
- Symptoms of psychosis (delusional or disordered thinking detached from reality.)
- Paranoia (extreme and unreasonable distrust of others.)
- Hallucinations (sensations and images that seem real though they are not.)
- Violent behavior
- Suicidal thoughts
- Use of these drugs is associated with a rising number of deaths.



Health effects can be unpredictable and dangerous, because the chemical composition of many synthetic cannabinoid products is unknown and may change from batch to batch, these products are likely to contain substances that cause dramatically different effects than the user might expect.