



Yavapai County Substance Abuse Coalition

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## ALERT: Synthetic Marijuana - Spice (K2) Fact Sheet

**Marketed as incense.** Spice/K2 is a legal substance marketed since 2006 as a dried, herbal blend for use as incense. 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, a synthetic THC, before it is packaged for sale. This spray is reportedly an "analgesic chemical which acts as a cannabinoid."

**More potent than marijuana.** Depending on synthetic compound in specific commercial brand, can be anywhere from 4 times to over 100 times more potent than regular marijuana (THC).

**Not for human consumption.** Spice is sold in smoke shops and head shops in a variety of colors/flavors-usually sold in foil packaging or in small glass containers. It is sold as incense and marked "not for human consumption". The average cost is \$30.00 a gram, more expensive than marijuana.

### Most likely users:

- 14-27 yr. olds
- Prisoners/probationers
- Military (use now banned by all military branches)

**Significant health risks.** Spice is causing a significant health risk. Spice/K2 is often contaminated with unidentified toxic substances which contribute to various adverse health effects (also cause hallucinogenic effects similar to effects of PCP). Symptoms/side-effects may include:

- mimics marijuana "high" (often induced more quickly/more intense than "real" marijuana)
- hallucinations
- seizures/tremors
- coma/unconsciousness
- vomiting
- numbness/tingling
- increased respiration rate
- elevated blood pressure (reported up to 200/100-medically dangerous)
- elevated heart rate (reported up to rate of 150-medically dangerous)
- increased level of anxiety/agitation leading to panic attacks (possible suicide attempts)
- All effects of K2/Spice drugs may not be known for a very long time because of long time period that body stores them.

**Contain possible cancer-causing agents.** JWH-018 & many of its "cousins" such as HU-210/211, JWH-073 & CP 47/497 found in these drugs have a chemical structure shared with known cancer-causing agents.

**Developed for research, never tested on humans.** Spice/K2 was developed by Dr. John W. Huffman, a Clemson University professor, as part of research for the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) on endogenous cannabinoid receptors-but never tested on humans nor approved by the FDA. Dr. Huffman said in an interview to WebMD, "It is like Russian roulette to use these drugs. We don't know a darn thing about them for real. It shouldn't be out there."

**Marketed under various names.** It is marketed under a variety of names including K2, Spice, Pep Spice, Spice Silver, Spice Gold, Spice Diamond, Smoke, Skunk, Yucatan Fire, Genie & Zohai Orange Dragon Smoke, Black Mamba, Blaze, Red X, and Dawn.

**Not just smoked.** Spice is most often smoked but can be mixed in with food or drink.

**State and International bans already in place.** K2 has been banned in many countries. The following states have banned spice: Kentucky, Illinois, Georgia, Missouri, Tennessee, Utah, Mississippi, Tennessee, Hawaii, Oregon, Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Michigan, Louisiana, Virginia and North Dakota, primarily through state legislation. New York, Texas, and New Jersey are considering legislation.