

NOVEL PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (sometimes called legal highs)

Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are herbal and/or chemical substances often producing similar effects to controlled drugs.

These substances may be advertised as legal, but they often contain illegal chemicals and therefore can lead to prosecution.

Also, just because a substance is 'legal' does not mean that it is without risk. Use of NPS either alone or with other substances can result in severe poisoning (toxicity) and serious harm.

Some NPS contain only caffeine.

Caffeine at doses of 1g per packet, can result in significant toxicity, overstimulation of the heart and sudden anxiety and panic attacks.

CONTACT INFORMATION

**If you would like support
around your substance
use, please complete a
self-referral form and
return to Health Care.**

PALS

To make a comment, raise a concern or make a complaint, please contact the Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

Tel: 01249 468261

Freephone: 0800 073 1778

Email: awp.pals@nhs.net

OTHER FORMATS OR LANGUAGES

If you need this information in other formats (such as large print, Braille) or in another language, please call the PALS number.

HMP BRISTOL
Substance Misuse Team

Spice Know the effects



WHAT IS SPICE?

- Synthetic Cannabinoids or 'Spice' refers to a wide variety of herbal mixtures and can be sold under many brand names such as 'K2'.
- They are sold as 'herbal' or 'natural' mixtures but are mostly made up of chemical compounds.
- Sometimes they have been found not to contain any synthetic cannabinoids at all.

THE EFFECTS

- Synthetic cannabinoids act like THC (the active substance in cannabis) and the effects can be similar.
- They may be stronger than cannabis.
- Some of the known effects are rapid heart rate, vomiting, confusion and hallucinations.
- Mood and perception can change and concentration and co-ordination may become difficult.
- Paranoia, panic attacks and forgetfulness are all associated with using cannabis and can be the same with 'Spice'.

THE RISKS

- Regular use of products containing synthetic cannabinoids may increase the risk of developing psychotic illnesses including schizophrenia.
- Experts are concerned that synthetic cannabinoids may be more harmful than cannabis because of the high strength of these compounds and because of the range of chemicals used to make it.
- Even when substances are sold as 'legal', they cannot be assumed to be safe.
- Brand names on packaging do not indicate the quality of the product. The chemical content may vary significantly from supplier to supplier and from batch to batch.
- Although synthetic cannabinoids are often designed to mimic the effects of other drugs, they are less predictable.
- Whether substances are legal or illegal, all drugs pose a risk of dependency and can cause short and long-term damage.

**You can never be certain
what you are taking.**

THE LAW

- All synthetic cannabinoids and most other novel psychoactive substances (NPS) are controlled substances under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971).
- Many synthetic cannabinoids and any mixtures that contain these synthetic cannabinoids, are Class B drugs.
- They are illegal to possess, sell or give away.
- Possession of products containing synthetic cannabinoids can result in prosecution and up to a five year prison sentence or an unlimited fine.
- Supplying someone else can result in a prison sentence of up to 14 years or an unlimited fine.
- Being convicted of a drug-related offence could have a serious impact on your future. It could affect the types of jobs you apply for and stop you from entering some countries.

