

## **SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA (POT)**

With names like Spice, K2, No More Mr. Nice Guy, and hundreds of others, the drugs often called “synthetic marijuana” are – in reality – very different from marijuana. They contain powerful chemicals called cannabimimetics and can cause dangerous health effects. The drugs are made specifically to be abused. Like many other illegal drugs, synthetic marijuana is not tested for safety, and users don’t really know exactly what chemicals they are putting into their bodies.

These synthetic drugs can be extremely dangerous and addictive. Health effects from the drug can be life-threatening and can include:

- Severe agitation and anxiety.
- Fast, racing heartbeat and higher blood pressure.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Muscle spasms, seizures, and tremors.
- Intense hallucinations and psychotic episodes.
- Suicidal and other harmful thoughts and/or actions.

Poison center experts – as well as many federal, state, and local government officials – have called synthetic drug use a risk to the public’s health and a hazard to public safety.

In 2015, through November 30, poison centers received reports of 7,369 exposures to synthetic cannabinoids.

The harmful effects from these products were first reported in the U.S. in 2009. Since then, the drugs have spread throughout the country. Poison centers received 2,668 calls about exposures to these drugs in 2013 and 3,680 exposures in 2014.

### **What should you do if someone has used synthetic cannabinoids?**

Call your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222. Fifty-five poison centers around the country have experts waiting to answer your call, 24/7. These experts can help you decide whether someone can be treated at home, or whether he or she must go to a hospital.

Dial 911 immediately if someone:

- Stops breathing.
- Collapses.
- Has a seizure.