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SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

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# RAYSAC Radar!



## What Parents Should Know About Synthetic Marijuana



Synthetic marijuana is gaining attention among high school seniors. According to the 2011 University of Michigan's *Monitoring the Future* study, one in every nine 12th graders reported using this drug. Spice is used to describe a diverse family of herbal mixtures marketed under many names, including K2, fake marijuana, Yucatan Fire, Skunk, Moon Rocks, and others. These products contain dried, shredded plant material and presumably, chemical additives that are responsible for their mind altering effects.

Spice mixtures are sold in many countries in head shops, gas stations, and via the Internet. Although their sale and use are illegal throughout most European countries, they are legal in some states in the United States. Easy access has likely contributed to Spice's popularity. While Spice products are labeled "not for human consumption," they are marketed to people who are interested in herbal alternatives to marijuana.

Some of the side effects and symptoms include: a marijuana "high" (often induced more quickly/more intensely 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), and increased level of anxiety/agitation leading to panic attacks (possible suicide attempts).

Virginia and about 40 other states regulate spice. In March of 2011, Virginia made it a crime to have or sell spice that contains any of 10 chemicals often used in the mixture. However, chemists who make spice have altered recipes to avoid bans, using what some feel are more potent ingredients than the original.

R. Gil Kerlikowske, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, urged parents to help stop teen use of Spice / K2. "It's not in the vocabulary of parents, and they need to be aware of it so that when they have that conversation about substance abuse they are knowledgeable," he said. "These drugs are dangerous and can cause serious harm."

Parents need to educate themselves about the dangers and health risks involved with the use of synthetic marijuana. Talk to your teens about these dangers.....they will listen!

For more information go to: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/infocfacts/Spice.html>