

Spice: Nothing Natural About It

'Spice' is a brand name, but for lack of a better term, is being used generically by the media and elsewhere to describe a variety of products which are also referred to as 'synthetic marijuana'. We use it here for simplicity, understanding that it is not an ideal way to describe these brands.

Spice products contain lab-made chemicals similar in structure to THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. One of five different versions of the chemical is sprayed onto plant material and marketed as incense labeled "not for human consumption", but is smoked in much the same ways as marijuana.

The substances, available in Europe since 2001, are legal at this point and have been sold in American head shops and convenience stores for the past year or two. They are popular with marijuana aficionados and others seeking a quick, legal high and hoping to still pass a drug test.

Pennsylvania was on the verge of banning the five chemical compounds in question, but the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) beat them to the punch. The DEA announced on November 24, 2010 an emergency ban on these synthetic ingredients for a minimum of one year in order to determine whether a permanent designation as a Schedule 1 drug (joining heroin, LSD, marijuana, and others) is warranted. The ban went into effect March 1, 2011, but a slightly different, and still legal, version of the product was already on store shelves.

The ban is designed to protect users from symptoms which have been landing even experienced marijuana smokers in emergency rooms at unacceptable rates. Many users are unprepared for the intense, often frightening hallucinations and feelings produced by this man-made chemical. Drug tests are now available for the seven main chemical compounds found in legal and banned Spice products from Redwood Toxicology and MedTox Clinical.

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Spice's Effects on the Mind & Body

- high blood pressure
- pounding heart
- rapid, shallow breathing
- flu-like symptoms— vomiting, chills
- numbness, tingling
- anxiety, paranoia, fear, confusion
- visual & auditory hallucinations
- impaired motor skills
- reduced concentration
- dry mouth
- seizures, tremors
- coma, unconsciousness

Other Names and Brands

- K2
- Synthetic marijuana
- Genie
- Bayou Blaster
- Blaze
- Red X Dawn
- Mad Hatter



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