

# POISONology

SAFETY & FIRST AID TIPS FROM THE ARIZONA POISON AND DRUG INFORMATION CENTER

## Fake 'highs' are dangerous



One is marketed as "fake marijuana." Another is advertised as "fake cocaine" or "fake meth." Both were initially sold as being legal substitutes for illegal drugs. But both are causing side effects that are often very dangerous. State and federal regulators have a hard time keeping up with these products as the ingredients change constantly.

Poison centers first began taking calls about "synthetic marijuana" in late 2009. The substances sold for between \$30 and \$40 per three-gram bag in packages labeled as incense or potpourri, and were marketed under brand names including "Spice," "K2," "Genie," "Green Buddha," and "Mint Chocolate Chip."

Next centers began to receive calls about products marketed as "bath salts" being sold on the Internet, gas stations and head shops. Packaging is usually a plastic bag filled with a white granular powder. The products are known by names including "Rave On," "Blue Silk," "Zoom," "Bloom," and "Cloud 9." They produce increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, agitation, hallucinations, extreme paranoia and delusions.

### Here are tips on these products and the dangers surrounding them:

- Parents of teens should be on the lookout for such products in their children's bedrooms and backpacks. Be particularly skeptical of products labeled "incense" or "bath salts."
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of drug use in loved ones: Paranoia, changes in personality, agitation and anxiety are among the symptoms reported by users of these substances.
- Talk with family members about the dangers of these products. Don't be fooled by the ready availability and legal status of new "designer drugs." These products are not a "safe" or harmless alternative to other drugs of abuse. Many can cause hallucinations and agitation that, poison center officials say, represent the opposite of a "mellow high." In the case of bath salts, for example, poison center officials report instances of severe paranoia that could cause the user to harm himself or others.
- Keep the poison center's number near your phone or enter it into your phone list: **1-800-222-1222**. Remember: You can call your poison center to ask about these substances even if you have not been exposed to them.

*If you have other poisoning concerns or questions, call the toll-free national hotline at 1-800-222-1222 to reach your local poison center. If you live in Arizona outside of Maricopa County, this number will get you to our experts at the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center in Tucson.*