

EDAS REACH YP NEWSLETTER



Synthetic cannabinoids (Spice)

Synthetic cannabinoids are lab-made drugs.

Spice is a nickname for a substance containing one or more synthetic cannabinoids.

Synthetic cannabinoids were originally designed to mimic the effects of cannabis. However, **they are much more harmful and unpredictable than cannabis.**

They may be powdered chemicals, dissolved and sprayed onto paper or dried plant material.



Risks of taking Spice



Many people experience unpleasant and unpredictable effects and **health risks** after taking synthetic cannabinoids.

This includes:

Inability to move

Dizziness

Breathing difficulties

Chest pain

Heart palpitations

Seizures

Extreme anxiety

Paranoia

Suicidal thoughts

Psychosis

Gastrointestinal issues

Vomiting

Diarrhoea

Acute kidney injury



Using synthetic cannabinoids with alcohol and other drugs, including prescribed medicines, increases the risks of unwanted and harmful effects.

Withdrawal Effects

People who use synthetic cannabinoids regularly over a long time commonly have withdrawal symptoms. Symptoms reported include:

headaches, anxiety, low mood, difficulty concentrating, irritability, restlessness, cravings

Due to their potency, **there's no safe way to take synthetic cannabinoids**. If someone does take them they should start low and go slow. Strength can be hugely variable so start with a very small dose - a match-head size or less.

If using more, increase doses very cautiously and give time (at least an hour) for previous doses to wear off.

Reducing the Risks

Mental Wellbeing

Synthetic cannabinoids may make feelings of anxiety or paranoia worse. So, only use them in an environment in which you feel safe and with people you trust.

Avoid using synthetic cannabinoids if you're prone to anxiety or have existing mental health problems.

Smoking Synthetic Cannabinoids

Inhaling any substance into your lungs is going to cause some level of irritation to the delicate tissue. This includes synthetic cannabinoid products.

» If you're smoking synthetic cannabinoids, **avoid smoking them neat**. Dried herbs can be used as an alternative to tobacco.

» **Avoid holding smoke in your lungs or breathing in too deeply** - take short puffs and be very cautious about smoking in pipes, vapourisers or bongs. They make it harder to regulate intake and it's easy to take too much.

» Water pipes cause you to inhale more deeply which increases lung damage. **Avoid sharing joints, vapes, pipes, and bongs with others.**

If your use of SPICE is affecting your health, family, relationships, school, work, finances, or other life situations, or you're concerned about a loved one, you can find help and support.

The EDAS/REACH Young People's Service are here to help. Get in touch with us on 01202 741414 or 0800 0434656 – Option 2.



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