What You Need to Know About Synthetic Drugs

Abuse of synthetic drugs is on the rise. There has been a recent flood of reports in the media regarding the newest crisis facing substance users/abusers in the United States. Use and abuse of these substances should be taken very seriously, as the impact of these drugs is still being investigated.

**Synthetic Cannabis**
Also called Spice, Synthetic Cannabis is known by a variety of other names including K2, K3, Skunk, and fake marijuana. This product, marketed and sold over the counter as potpourri or incense, is a mixture of dried plants and herbs that have been sprayed with mind-altering, psychoactive chemicals. Spice is sold in a variety of settings across the country, most commonly at gas stations and smoke shops where it is easily accessible to the average consumer. Because manufacturers label Spice as “not for human consumption,” and because laws about manufacturing and selling Spice are still in their infancy, the problem continues. Substance users often abuse Spice due to the ability to buy it with ease and the fact that it does not come up on traditional drug screening measures. As a parent, friend, or significant other you can look for the following change in behaviors as indicators of use:

- Increased agitation or anxiety
- Paranoia or delusions
- Red, watery eyes
- Rapid heart rate
- Confusion
- Vomiting

**Bath Salt Cocaine**
Commonly referred to as Bath Salts, this substance is marketed and sold legally under a variety of names including Ivory Wave, Vanilla Sky, and Purple Sky. Bath salts, like Spice, are often sold over the counter at gas stations, smoke shops, and over the Internet. These drugs are not actual bath salts used for bathing, but rather a very powerful amphetamine-like substance that is used both nasally and by IV injection. The effects are powerful and appear to cause addiction rather quickly. In the last year there have been an alarming number of ER visits linked to abuse of Bath Salts. Please look for the following behaviors as indicators of use:

- Reports of chest pain
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Agitation
- Hallucinations
- Paranoia
- Delusions

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