

**K2/Spice Fact Sheet**  
**( Sue Parr, CCOVA Public Policy Coordinator )**

1. K2/Spice products are a mixture of herbal/spice plant products sprayed with potent psychotropic drugs, often contaminated with unidentified toxic substances which contribute to various adverse health effects (also cause hallucinogenic effects similar to effects of PCP).
2. Marketed under variety of names including K2, Spice, Pep Spice, Spice Silver, Spice Gold, Spice Diamond, Smoke, Sence, Skunk, Yucatan Fire, Genie & Zohai- sold in variety of colors/flavors-usually sold in foil packaging
3. Symptoms/Side-Effects may include:
  - a. mimics marijuana “high” (often induced more quickly/more intense than “real” marijuana)
  - b. hallucinations
  - c. seizures/tremors
  - d. coma/unconsciousness
  - e. vomiting
  - f. numbness/tingling
  - g. increased respiration rate
  - h. elevated blood pressure (reported up to 200/100-medically dangerous)
  - i. elevated heart rate (reported up to rate of 150-medically dangerous)
  - j. increased level of anxiety/agitation leading to panic attacks (possible suicide attempts)
4. Depending on synthetic compound in specific commercial brand, can be anywhere from 4 times to over 100 times more potent than regular marijuana (THC)
5. Sold in tobacco shops, head shops, and convenience stores
6. Sold as “incense” marked “not for human consumption”
7. Price averages \$45 for 3 grams (about equal to 3 sugar packets)-higher than good grade marijuana
8. Most often smoked but can be mixed in with food or drink
9. Most likely users:
  - a. 14-27 yr. olds
  - b. Prisoners/probationers
  - c. Military (use now banned by all military branches)
10. Developed by Dr. John W. Huffman, a Clemson University professor, as part of research for National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) on endogenous cannabinoid receptors-but never tested on humans nor approved by FDA
11. Dr. Huffman said in interview to WebMD “It is like Russian roulette to use these drugs. We don’t know a darn thing about them for real.” “It shouldn’t be out there.”
12. JWH-018 & many of its “cousins” such as HU-210/211, JWH-073 & CP 47/497 found in these drugs have a chemical structure shared with known cancer-causing agents.
13. All effects of K2/Spice drugs may not be known for very long time because of long time period that body stores them.
14. So far nothing is known about metabolism of the chemical compounds in K2/Spice drugs-some may be toxic and/or pharmacologically active-differing from batch to batch in kind/amount of applied drugs (synthetic) thus resulting in higher risk of

- accidental overdosing which has already been seen & is on rise with these drugs with increase numbers of ER & hospital incidents reported
15. There are hundreds more of these chemical compounds containing active cannabinoid receptors so can be safely assumed that further such substances will appear on market soon if not banned-greatly increasing challenges for toxicology testing, law enforcement and medical/healthcare professionals.
  16. Causing difficulties for law enforcement agencies, including probation & parole, as well as drug courts due to difficulties in testing for presence-one lab test now known to detect it in system but at cost of \$50 & will probably not test positive for all the known variations
  17. Dr. Huffman & Dr. Huestis (Chief of Chemistry/Drug Metabolism at National Institute for Drug Abuse) indicate that when taking these drugs, it is “hijacking the part of the brain important for many major functions: temperature control, food intake, perception, memory and problem solving. Many people taking these high-potency drugs are affecting important functions throughout their bodies-hormone functions for example.” Doctors also express concern that the drugs may involve acute toxicity levels, possibly long term, as well as impacting cannabinoid receptors that regulate body’s immune system.
  18. Retailers selling the drugs report a recent increase in sales from app. \$1000 daily up to \$10, 000 daily.
  19. Medical reports indicate that K2/Spice drugs potentially result in users developing a rapid and powerful addiction on a level not usually found among smokers of “real” marijuana.
  20. Recently linked to over 352 nationwide emergency room incidents-includes suicide attempts, extremely elevated heart rate/blood pressure, comas, seizures, and anxiety attacks.
  21. Police in Indianola, Iowa report 18 yr old smoking K2 resulting in severe anxiety attack-stated was “going to hell” and went home and shot & killed his self.
  22. K2/Spice is labeled by users as the “stealth” marijuana.
  23. Dr. Anthony Scalzo (professor of toxicology at St. Louis University) indicates he’s seen nearly 30 cases in past month involving teenagers experiencing hallucinations, severe agitation, elevated heart rate/blood pressuer, vomiting and tremors/seizures as result of smoking K2.
  24. Dr. Scalzo says that what makes K2 (and other Spice derivatives) so dangerous is that its side effects suggest that it also affects the user’s cardiovascular system, as well as the central nervous system.
  25. One sign of use that parents should look for is dried herbal residue in their children’s rooms, as well as the foil packets in trash.
  26. Check out advertising at <http://www.dutchincense.com/>

\*\*\* If you have any additional questions, information or input regarding this synthetic marijuana product and it’s local use/distribution, please contact Sue Parr, the legislative/public policy director for CCOVA (Community Coalitions of VA-[www.ccova.org](http://www.ccova.org)) & the Bragg Hill Community Coalition’s Drug Free Community Project Director at 540-371-3513 (W), 540-287-5764 (C), or [bragghillcc@live.com](mailto:bragghillcc@live.com)