

SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA

WHAT IS IT?

Synthetic Marijuana also known as K2 or Spice is a relatively new designer drug; one that is appealing to youth because of its colorful packaging and labeling. It is made from a growing number of man-made mind-altering chemicals that are constructed to mimic marijuana. Because of this people often refer to it as “fake weed” or “legal weed,” however, it is anything but legal.

The chemicals are often sprayed on a dried plant material or sold in liquid form for smoking. Although intended to mimic marijuana, its effects are very different and much more unpredictable. Its unpredictability comes from the fact that each baggie contains a different potency level depending on how the chemicals adhered to the plant material.

The impact of Synthetic Marijuana has been so swift and great that Congress has taken steps to ban many of these substances at the Federal level. Over 40 U.S. states including Louisiana have taken similar actions. Louisiana, in particular, has aggressively addressed synthetic marijuana by banning each new compound as it emerges. However, no matter how tough our legislative body is, manufacturers still manage to produce variations of the chemical structure which aren't banned.



FAKE WEED, REAL SIDE EFFECTS.

Synthetic Marijuana like most other drugs is addictive. If you or someone you know is having problems, treatment is available. Users often report extreme anxiety, paranoia, and hallucinations. People who have had bad reactions to the drug list these symptoms:

- **fast heart rate**
- **throwing up**
- **feeling anxious or nervous**
- **feeling confused**
- **violent behavior**
- **suicidal thoughts**

Please call 911 immediately if you suspect someone has used Synthetic Marijuana and is experiencing any of the symptoms listed or call Louisiana Poison Control Center at (800) 222-1222.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT IT

At **THE KNOWLEDGE EFFECT** we strive to assess the risks factors posed by synthetic marijuana within Lafayette Parish and address those factors by implementing strategies for change. Our aim is to curb synthetic marijuana usage. Specific action steps taken by our coalition and our partners include:

1. Promoting enforcement
2. Advocating for policies to reduce the availability of synthetic marijuana in retail outlets
3. Educating high-school students about synthetics
4. Educating school system employees on recognizing the early signs of abuse
5. Coordinating educational forums for professionals and community members
6. Educating the general public about synthetic marijuana and its side-effects