



To: All Washington State Emergency Departments  
From: William T. Hurley, MD, FACEP  
Medical Director, Washington Poison Center  
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Subject: **K2 Spice Update**

The Washington Poison Center continues to see the use of synthetic marijuana. This product is packaged under a variety of names, particularly K2 and spice. Other names include Genie, Zohai, Spice Tropical, Synergy, Spice Egypt, Spice Arctic, Triple X, Yucatan Fire, Spice Silver, Spice Gold, Spice Diamond, Sence, Smoke and Bombay Blue. The product is a potpourri like substance that is intended for burning (similar to incense) and can be purchased in stores or on the internet.

Since December 2, 2011 synthetic cannabinoids, and substituted cathinones or bath salts have been added to Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. The rules give clear authority to law enforcement to prosecute for the distribution, manufacture, sale, and possession of these substances. It alerts the public to the potential health risks that could result from using them.

The substance is adulterated with a variety of chemicals, including HU-210, JWH-018, JWH-073, and CP 47,497. All of these chemicals have been used in labs for experiments on the cannabinoid system. They stimulate cannabinoid receptors in the brain; the same receptors that are stimulated by smoking marijuana.

Some users report similar effects to marijuana, but many patients develop symptoms that bring them to the Emergency Department including:

Tachycardia	Hypertension
Agitation	Mydriasis
Paranoia	Hyperthermia

It remains unclear if these side effects are due to another drug that is added to these products or if this is simply the effect of an overdose of the known constituents.

Patients have been reported to have negative drug screens. However, Redwood Toxicology Laboratory, Inc. (phone: 800-255-2159) now offers lab-based testing for the detection of JWH-018 and JWH-073 metabolites in urine. JWH-018 and JWH-073 are the primary synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists responsible for the euphoric and psychoactive effects that imitate marijuana and are among the numerous compounds found in "herbal" incense or smoke blends.

Treatment at this time consists of supportive care, including: IV fluids, benzodiazepines as needed for agitation, and monitoring for hyperthermia, seizures, and rhabdomyolysis.

If you have questions about this topic or any suspected poisoning case in your area, please contact the Washington Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. We have nurses, pharmacists, poison specialists, & Medical Toxicologists available 24/7.

*William Hurley MD*