



# LOUDOUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE NARCOTICS UNIT INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



## SYNTHETIC DRUGS

**SUMMARY:** Designer drugs are becoming increasingly popular among recreational drug users as they are perceived as being "legal" alternatives to marijuana, cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA. They are clandestinely produced to mimic the effects of a controlled substance and sold online, in head shops/smoke shops or in convenience stores "under the counter". They are typically marketed to teens and young adults with unknown ingredients (there is no consistency in the manufacturing process). They are not FDA approved and are not tested for human consumption.

**LOCAL STATS:** According to Inova Loudoun Hospital, they estimate 28 patients in the last year (May 2012-May 2013) have had symptoms of a possible overdose of synthetic drugs. "Several patients have needed critical care to manage the complications of their overdose and have been admitted to the intensive care unit. In addition, we have taken care of patients intoxicated with such drugs that have had psychotic behavior making them a danger to themselves and others." Gina Harrison, Nurse Manager Inova Loudoun, believes that this epidemic "has been more prevalent in the last 2 years."

**K2/SPICE:** A mixture of herbs, spices, or shredded plant material that is typically sprayed with a synthetic compound chemically similar to THC, which is the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. This is typically sold in small, silvery plastic packets of dried leaves and are marketed as incense that can be smoked. It can resemble potpourri in appearance of that of brown/green dried plant material. K2/Spice products are typically smoked in joints or pipes, but some users make it in to a tea for consumption.



**SIDE EFFECTS:** Effects are reportedly comparable to marijuana but include additional dangers to users such as panic attacks, heart palpitations, hallucinations, delusions, vomiting, increased agitation, and other symptoms.

**BATH SALTS:** Bath Salts contain manmade chemicals related to amphetamines that often consist of Methylenedioxypropylvalerone (MDPV), mephedrone, and methylone, also known as substituted cathinones (a central nervous system stimulant). It is sold in powder form in small plastic or foil packages of 200-500 milligrams under various brand names. They are usually in a fine or coarse (rock salt), off-white or slightly yellow-colored powder. It can be found in tablet form, but it is typically contained and distributed in capsules containing approximately .10 grams on average. "Bath Salts" are usually ingested by sniffing or snorting. They can also be taken orally, smoked, or put into a solution and injected into veins.



**SIDE EFFECTS:** Effects include agitation, extreme nervousness, nausea, vomiting, tachycardia, elevated blood pressure, tremors and seizures, hallucinations, nose bleeds, sweating and the very real possibility of heart attacks and strokes.

**VIRGINIA LEGISLATION:** An emergency legislation went into effect on March 23, 2011 making the possession, sale, gift, distribution or possession with the intent to sell, give or distribute synthetic cannabinoids; bath salts, illegal. The new codes, §18.2-248.1:1 makes possession of cannabinoids a Class 1 Misdemeanor. Possession with intent to sell, give or distribute a Class 6 Felony. The legislation also added bath salts, including their isomers, esters, ethers, salts, and salts of isomers, esters, and ethers as a Schedule 1 Narcotic.

For Additional information, please visit the website for Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, <http://sheriff.loudoun.gov/> and look for a presentation to be included in the Internet Safety Program designed for parents next fall.