

An Issue of Influence...

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K2 or Spice... The Importance of Being Informed.

There has been a lot of buzz about K2 or Spice lately. Both terms are used to refer to a type of synthetic marijuana that has been circulating among our youth. The substance is a psychoactive herbal and chemical product which, when consumed mimics the effects of cannabis or marijuana. Recently, the DEA used its emergency powers to make the group of chemicals in K2 illegal for regular possession and distribution. The drug and others like it will be studied over the next year to determine their safety. Until then, they are on the list of Scheduled or controlled drugs and only accessible by a few approved by the DEA.

How does it work?

This K2 compound was first created in the mid-1990s in the lab of organic chemist John W. Huffman of Clemson University, who was studying cannabinoid receptors. The compound works on the brain in the same way as marijuana's active ingredient THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol. Huffman was quoted in LiveScience as saying: "You can get very high on it. It's about 10 times more active than THC," the active ingredient in marijuana. In other words, it takes a lot less K2 to get just as high.

What makes it dangerous?

The compound is being made without strict quality control or any regulation, as far as anyone knows, the compound itself has never been tested on humans. Since K2 acts like marijuana, one would expect to see the same effects, including sleepiness, relaxation, reduced blood pressure, and at high doses, hallucinations and delusions. However, other symptoms such as hallucinations, increased agitation and elevated blood pressure and heart rates, that don't match up with marijuana are being reported. Speculation is that there is either another compound responsible for the nasty side effects, or the concentration of the synthetic cannabinoid (JWH-018) is too high. According to Huffman's research, JWH-018 binds to the peripheral brain (CB2) receptors, which are involved in the immune system. Further testing is needed, but symptoms such as fast heart beat, dangerously elevated blood pressure, pale skin and vomiting suggest that K2 is also affecting the cardiovascular system of users. And other symptoms, such as severe, potentially life-threatening hallucinations and, in some cases, seizures, point to its probable affect on the central nervous system.

According to a quote by the compounds creator; "It's like playing Russian roulette. You don't know what it's going to do to you..."

What can you do about it?

- *Listen* to what your youth is saying.
- *Watch* closely what your youth is doing.
- *Educate* yourself about what is going on with youth in our area.
- *Gather* information about substances such as K2, marijuana, prescription drugs, alcohol and nicotine and how they affect the body and brain of our youth.
- *Teach* your youth about these substances and their harmful effects.
- *Prepare* your youth for situations in which they will be approached or pressured to use these substances.
- *Give* your youth support and encouragement to make positive choices for their futures.
- *Be* there when they need to talk about what is important to them.

It is An Issue of Influence...



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Youth Event Calendar



Mondays:

5:30-7:00pm

at the Laporte School in the FACS room.

Alternative Highs

Check our facebook page for Rock N Sober for details!



New Tobacco Products are in disguise

Keep and eye out for some of the new tobacco products that are coming onto the market. Smokeless tobacco is on the rise amongst our youth. New packaging for tobacco products includes containers that look like gum, mints, and lip gloss containers. Don't be fooled.



Just a few examples of new product packaging. There are many new flavors such as peach, strawberry and some even named to suggest drug-like effects. Some cater to novelty packaging as well.

Check your local school district policy to see if these products are included in those not allowed on campus. Awareness is key. Be proactive in helping our youth not to begin an addiction they could be saddled with the rest of their lives!

Opportunities for Involvement!

The Hubbard County Youth Drug Taskforce has many opportunities for community members to be involved. Volunteer opportunities include:

- ◆ Being a Community Council member to help plan events and education specific to the community you live in. Examples: Youth Events, Parent Education, Family Activities and Town Hall meeting.
- ◆ Volunteer your time or services for a Youth Event in Hubbard County
- ◆ Be a Sparks mentor for youth helping them to find their talents and passions
- ◆ Office Support for assembly and distribution of prevention materials
- ◆ Be a speaker for youth events to tell your story of addiction and recovery.

Call 218-252-8275 or email heydatf@yahoo.com for more details on how to help.

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What:

Our community is serious about preventing medication misuse/abuse and about environmentally safe disposal of medication.

When:

7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

How:

- Leave medication in the original container.
- Remove your name & personal information.
- Keep the name of the medication.
- Drop medication into the disposal box.

Where:

Hubbard County Sheriff's Office
301 Court Ave. Park Rapids, MN

Sparks Retreat is coming!

March 11th & 12th, 2011

- ◆ Do you know of a youth grades 6-8 that does not realize their potential?
- ◆ Do you know a youth that leads, but not necessarily in the best way?
- ◆ Do you know a youth that would excel if they had some positive focus and direction?

Then the Sparks retreat is for them. Contact your Home School Interventionist to nominate a 6-8 grade student today!