



# PENNSYLVANIA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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## NEWS YOU CAN USE

### ***DESIGNER DRUGS***

***A TERM USED TO DESCRIBE DRUGS THAT ARE CREATED BY MODIFYING THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURES OF ILLEGAL DRUGS TO GET AROUND EXISTING DRUG LAWS.***

***THESE CAN PRODUCE THE SAME EFFECTS OF ILLEGAL DRUGS SUCH AS HEROIN, COCAINE, OPIUM AND METHAMPHETAMINE. THEY MAY NOT BE ILLEGAL YET BUT THEY HAVE PROVEN TO PRODUCE THE SAME TOXIC AND SOMETIMES DEADLY RESULTS.***

***PARENTS AND OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT AWARE THAT MOST OF THESE DESIGNER DRUGS ARE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE AND IF USED IN COMBINATION WITH OTHER DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, THE CONSEQUENCES CAN BE DANGEROUS.***

### **BATH SALTS**

It sounds harmless enough: Bath Salts. But this is not that kind of bath salts. These bath salts when ingested can cause paranoia, hallucinations, rapid heart rate, suicidal thoughts, and death. These bath salts stimulate the central nervous system, are highly addictive and extremely dangerous. These "bath salts" are legal and for about \$20.00, anyone can purchase them.

Bath salts are sold under such names as Ivory Wave, Bliss, Vanilla Sky, White Lightning, and Hurricane Charlie. They are available on the internet and in specialty stores. Unheard of just a few years ago, its use is on the rise and four deaths throughout the country have been attributed to the drug.

Poison Control Centers throughout the United States had no reported cases in 2009, 236 total reports in 2010, and 248 cases reported for January 2011 alone.

For our children's sake we need to get educated about this product.

Traditional bath salts contain nothing more than sea salt and harmless perfuming agents. Their psychological effect is one of calm and relaxation. It is soothing to the mind and body. Perfect to soak in after a long, stressful day.

The designer drug known as "Bath Salts", although clearly marked not for human consumption, has been smoked, snorted and injected and is highly addictive. The active chemicals are mephedrone and methylenedioxypyrovalerone, also referred to as MDPV. The effects can be as powerful as methamphetamine, and as dangerous. It does not relax you in mind or body. It acts as a stimulant and directly affects your neurotransmitters.

The salts cause intense cravings. Users have been known to binge on the salts for three and four days before ending up in the local emergency room. After a horrible "trip" they still want to go back and do it again.

The white powder stimulants are not regulated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, however, they are a cause for concern and are being scrutinized by federal (continued on page 2)

## BATH SALTS (continued)

officials. Unfortunately, it is a long process that could take years to restrict the use of these designer drugs and review the abuse data. Law enforcement officials and poison control centers nationwide see bath salts as a growing threat across the country. Many states have or are introducing legislation to ban the sale of these drugs ahead of the federal government. As of March 2011, 25 states have passed legislation banning these designer drugs. In April, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed House Bill 356 to effectively ban the drug in the Commonwealth. Similar legislation is pending in the Senate.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF "BATH SALTS" USE

Use of "bath salts" causes severe symptoms and side effects that include:

- Severe paranoia
- Violent behavior
- Hallucinations
- Chest pain
- Seizures
- Decreased need for sleep
- Lack of appetite
- Self-mutilation

Users frequently describe the high as horrible and report seeing demons, monsters, foreign soldiers or aliens. Some have symptoms that last for 2 to 3 days. Some require long term psychiatric care because their symptoms did not improve.

### LONG TERM HEALTH PROBLEMS THAT RESULT FROM USE OF "BATH SALTS"

- Kidney failure
- Liver failure
- Increased risk of suicide
- Long term mental illness
- Self-mutilation
- Death

### SOME SIGNS TO LOOK FOR IF YOU SUSPECT DRUG ABUSE

It can be hard for parents to know if their kids are using "Bath salts" as they can be purchased over the counter at convenience stores and novelty shops.

No one knows your teen better than you, however, be alert if their circle of friends suddenly changes, or they now hang out with different friends than is normal for them. Also, cryptic messages on Facebook and Twitter, may be a cause for concern.

At least it might be a good time to talk to your kids about it, and you may even have to go further because bath salts can be an entry way for illegal drugs.

## SALVIA "a Drug of Concern"

Synthetic marijuana or "salvia" is legal in Pennsylvania for now. In an effort to curtail designer drugs in our Commonwealth, the House of Representatives has crafted and passed legislation to add salvia to the list of controlled substances. House Bill 365 is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee. It must pass in the Senate prior to going to the Governor for action.

(Information below from [www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov))

### What is Salvia?

Salvia divinorum, also known as "Sally D;" "Magic Mint;" "Shepherdess' Herb;" "SkaMaria Pastora;" "Diviner's Sage;" or "Sage of the Seers;" is a perennial herb in the mint family.

It is a plant with large green leaves and white and purple flowers that usually grows in large clusters to more than 3 feet in height. It is traditionally used by the Mazatecs Indians of Oaxaca, Mexico as a mystical healing tool with vision-inducing and ritual divination qualities.

The plant contains a powerful psychoactive chemical, salvinorin A, which causes intense hallucinations. Salvinorin A is one of the most potent of the naturally occurring hallucinogens, being effective at 200-500 (continued on page 3)

# SALVIA "A Drug of Concern"

continued

micrograms. (LSD is orally active at 50-100 micrograms.)

## How is Salvia divinorum used?

It is sold in solid (seeds or leaves) or liquid (extract) form and can be chewed, imbibed (drank), inhaled or smoked. When chewed, its effects first appear within 5 to 10 minutes. When smoked, (most common) its effects appear within 30 seconds.

## What are the effects of Salvia divinorum?

Current research suggests that Salvia (salvinorin A) acts on the kappa opioid receptor of the brain which alters perception. Hundreds of derivatives of salvinorin A have been synthesized since its reported action on kappa opioid receptors. This receptor is implicated in pain control and possibly in psychiatric disorders.

Experiences, described as intense but short lived are influenced by dose and administration. Effects range from visual distortion, hallucinations, intense dissociation and disconnectness from reality, physical and visual impairment, synesthesia (e.g. hear colors and smell sounds), disorientation, dizziness and dysphoria.

## What is the legal status of Salvia divinorum?

Salvia is not currently regulated by the United States Government.

It is not listed under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) nor approved for medical use.

The DEA regards Salvia a "drug of concern," and is monitoring reports of abuse.

DEA is in the process of conducting the Eight Factor Analysis as required by the CSA to assess the dangers of Salvia.

At the National Institute on Drug Abuse's request, Salvia is being monitored by the Community Epidemiology Work Group.

In place of a Federal designation, various local communities and states have passed or are attempting to pass regulations on the possession and/or sale of Salvia divinorum and/or salvinorin A.

Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma and Tennessee have regulations in place and Alaska, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania and Virginia (among others)

have proposed regulations.

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Although the long term effects of the synthetic marijuana are not known at this time, there have been reported cases across the country of elevated heart rate, confusion, nausea, and possible suicide attributed to the drug.

## Synthetic marijuana hazardous, should be made illegal in U.S.

(This article was originally published in the Daily Collegian January 24, 2011 and is reprinted with permission)

By Erin Rowley, Collegian Columnist

Synthetic marijuana is sold as incense with a wink and a nod, but at upwards of \$50 per packet, this stuff ain't patchouli.

More than 1,500 people — including a close friend of mine — were treated in emergency rooms last year after smoking synthetic marijuana, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers

I had never heard of synthetic marijuana (sometimes called K2, Spice or JWH) before this incident. But after seeing the terrified look in his eyes as he described how taking this drug made him feel, I'll never forget it.

Synthetic cannabinoids consist of plants soaked in dangerous chemicals, the effects of which are designed to mimic those of THC, but in reality, the synthetic substances are much, much stronger. The manufacturer's ability to adjust the formula slightly makes it difficult to regulate — and also contributes to inconsistency in the product. You never know exactly what you're getting. Many people who use the drug hoping for a marijuana-like, relaxing high instead encounter hallucinations and seizures.

I know that advocating restrictions on a marijuana-like substance is not the most popular thing among the college crowd.

But this is not the same stuff your older brother attempted to grow on his windowsill.

Whatever your stance on marijuana, banning these artificial THC posers is something we can all get behind.

Chris Goldstein, spokesman for the Philadelphia chapter of The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), a group that seeks the decriminalization of marijuana in the United States, told the Philadelphia Inquirer in September that he wouldn't recommend people use synthetic marijuana because some samples of the drug have tested positive for formaldehyde (continued on page 4)

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**Synthetic marijuana hazardous...** *(continued)*

and acetone, making smoking synthetic pot like "setting a plastic spoon on fire and inhaling."

As the number of injuries related to the drug has increased, so has attention from lawmakers. More than a dozen states have banned the fake pot and many more, including Pennsylvania, are considering doing so.

Last week, Rep. Jennifer Mann (D-Lehigh) introduced House Bill 176, which aims to make substances including synthetic cannabinoids and salvia, a psychoactive plant that can produce hallucinations, illegal in Pennsylvania. A similar bill was approved by a vote of 198 to 1 last year, but expired before it could be voted on in the senate.

Last November the federal Drug Enforcement Administration declared its intention to temporarily classify five synthetic cannabinoids as Schedule I controlled substances, the most restrictive category, while it investigates whether the ban should be permanent.

But two months later, the DEA has yet to put the ban into action.

Even though the ban is not yet in place, manufacturers have already tweaked their formulas slightly to get around it.

Because of this, the fight to make synthetic marijuana illegal will be a difficult one. I applaud Congresswoman Mann for taking on this fight and I encourage the Senate to vote 'yes' on House Bill 176.

Making these substances illegal won't stop people from consuming them, but at least it'll take away the excuse "it's legal, it must be safe," and it'll make getting it harder than walking over to your local head shop.

*Erin Rowley is a senior majoring in journalism and is the Daily Collegian's Monday columnist.*

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