

# NPS (SPICE) & OTHER SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS



## WHAT IS SPICE?

Spice and other synthetic cannabinoids can be highly addictive, toxic drugs that have been known to cause overdose and fatalities.

There is no safe way to use spice, it is not the same as cannabis - it is more potent, more unpredictable and more dangerous.

Spice is very addictive – regular use of spice can lead to a dependency and withdrawal when not using.

## HARM REDUCTION

If you are going to use spice then please follow the harm reduction advice below:

- Spice can vary in different batches – the bottom of the bag can often be stronger – if using from the bottom of the bag be careful.
- Start with a very small dose – use an amount the size of a match head (or less) as potency can vary.
- Never smoke spice neat – mix with either tobacco or dried herbs.
- Avoid using spice with other drugs – Mixing with alcohol, amphetamine or other stimulants may increase the risk of heart problems.
- Be cautious with pipes and bongs – It is harder to regulate how much you are using.
- Spice can make you anxious and make mental health problems worse – spice can increase the feelings of anxiety and paranoia.

Following use of spice people may act in a worrying way – they may be confused and have difficulty communicating. It is important to stay with the person, try and reassure them and if symptoms worsen to seek medical attention.

## SYMPTOMS OF OVERDOSE AND INTOXICATION

- Seizures (fits) – ensure that the area is safe and that the person cannot hurt themselves – call for an ambulance. If the seizure stops and the person is not breathing start CPR.
- Vomiting – If someone starts to vomit ensure that they don't have anything to eat. Stay with them and ensure that they are safe, if they wish to sleep it is important they sleep in the recovery position.
- Hallucinations – people may start to hallucinate or become panicked. Do not leave the person and stay with them until symptoms improve. Try and go somewhere quiet.
- Breathing difficulties – Some people may breathe fast and have a fast heart beat – if this does not settle within a few minutes then call for an ambulance.  
**IF SOMEONE IS NOT BREATHING THEN CALL FOR AN AMBULANCE AND START CPR.**
- Chest Pains – Ensure that the person is safe, stay with them and try to reassure them – Call for an ambulance.
- Unresponsive/loss of consciousness – if someone is unresponsive or unconscious then call for an ambulance and put them in the recovery position.

## WHAT TO DO IN AN OVERDOSE

It is important to respond to the symptoms as more than one drug may have been used. If you believe that someone has also used any opiates and that has caused the overdose then use a naloxone kit to reverse the opiate overdose. If you require a naloxone kit then please ask within the service.

## IF YOU NEED HELP WITH SPICE ADDICTION

There is no substitute medication for spice addiction however there are psychosocial interventions available. If you would like to access the service for support please get in touch.

We are based at Trafalgar House, 41-45 Beverley Road, Hull. You can call us on 01482 620013 or email us on [Earlyhelp.hull@cgl.org.uk](mailto:Earlyhelp.hull@cgl.org.uk).

