

- **Synthetic Cannabinoids (Synthetic Marijuana)**
 - Synthetic cannabinoids are substances that are sold as a “safe”, legal alternative to marijuana. Although these herbal mixtures are marketed as safe, the reality is anything but. These packages of herbal mixtures are usually supplemented with chemical additives that give the mixture its psychoactive effects. Although the packages are marked saying that they contain natural materials, when analyzed for chemical composition, it is revealed that these mixtures often contain designer cannabinoids compounds. Over the years, the mixtures have been sold in smoking paraphernalia stores and gas station but due to their high potential for abuse and no therapeutic effects, the DEA has banned several of the active psychoactive ingredients in the mixture, making them illegal to sell, own, or use. However, these packages are still abused among the population, specifically in the high school student population. Another way that these mixtures are marketed is through how easily they are concealed on simple drug tests. (drugabuse)
 - **Street Names:** K2, Spice, Black Mamba, Fake Weed, Skunk, Yucatan, Smacked (drugabuse)
 - **Uses:** These drugs are usually packaged and sold as a “safe”, legal alternative to marijuana and are usually administered in a similar fashion. These mixtures can be smoked alone or mixed with marijuana to produce more of an effect. Although smoking is the usual form of introduction to the body, these mixtures can also be prepared as an herbal tea and drank to produce similar effects. (drugabuse)
 - **Physical Effects:** Although the physical effects of these drugs are unpredictable due to how little is known about the individual compounds, some of the side effects are consistent across the board. The most common physical effects for these drugs are increased heart rate, vomiting, increased blood pressure, reduced blood flow to the heart, and heart attack. (drugabuse)
 - **Psychological Effects:** Some of the psychological effects can be exacerbated while using synthetic cannabinoids in high doses or in conjunction with other drugs. These effects include agitation, confusion, hallucinations, anxiety, and paranoia. (drugabuse)
 - **Long-Term Effects:** Although there may be negative long-term effects of these mixtures, there have not been enough scientific studies to provide consistent results on the long-term health effects of synthetic cannabinoids. (drugabuse)
 - **Withdrawal:** Due to how varied these mixtures are, some or all of the withdrawal effects of these drugs can be experienced when quitting these compounds. Some of these symptoms include headaches, anxiety, depression, and irritability. (drugabuse)

Sources:

Center for Substance Abuse Research [<http://www.cesar.umd.edu>]

Drugabuse [<http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts>]