

# PARTS- South County addresses synthetic drugs (K2/Spice (Synthetic Marijuana) and Bath Salts)

PARTS is concerned about the prevalence and dangers associated with the sales, death, intoxication, and public safety concerns of synthetic based drugs throughout Monterey County. These drugs are also known as Designer Drugs. Several Police Chiefs in South County, including the Chiefs of King City, Greenfield, Soledad and Gonzales shared testimonies and statistics in a recent South County Joint Council meeting.

## Background:

**K2/Spice (also known as synthetic marijuana)** consists of plant material that has been sprayed with chemicals that mimic THC, the active ingredient in marijuana that gives a euphoric effect. Synthetic marijuana binds to the same receptors in the brain as marijuana. While marijuana is generally not deadly, its synthetic version is not regulated by the federal government and its chemical composition is known only to the street chemists. Common effects of ingesting K2/Spice are: hallucinations, anxiety, paranoia, and giddiness. The physiological effects of K2 are increased heart rate, elevated body temperature, and increased blood pressure. Some of the other effects are increased agitation, seizures, uncontrolled spastic body movement, and even death. K2/Spice first became available in the United States in 2008. It is often marketed as incense, and labeled “not for human consumption” which allows it to be imported and distributed in great quantities.

While there has been much legislation enacted to combat the ever increasing popularity of designer drugs, as soon as chemicals are identified and outlawed, other synthetic chemicals are developed to replace them, making legislation inert.

## **Bath Salts**

These designer drugs are called bath salts because they are generally sold in crystal form that look like every day bath salts. Unfortunately these drugs are so unpredictable, that even a single use can cause death. Bath Salts are cathinones, an amphetamine product that has horrible side effects. Bath Salts are known to create an “excited delirium” with body temperatures of 105F or higher.

According to Monterey County Juvenile Probation System, synthetic drugs like K2/Spice or bath salts are the drug of choice in youthful offenders. The Office of National Drug Control Policy also notes that nationwide, the use of synthetic cannabinoids is alarmingly high, especially among young people. According to the 2012 Monitoring the Future survey of youth drug-use trends, one in nine 12th graders in America reported using synthetic cannabinoids in the past year. This rate, unchanged from 2011, puts synthetic cannabinoids as the second most frequently used illegal drug among high school seniors after marijuana.

Because of the extreme danger that these synthetic drugs cause due to their unknown chemical components, potency and wide availability, PARTS supports banning the sale, possession and distribution of all synthetic drugs throughout Monterey County and congratulates the cities of Soledad, Gonzales, and Greenfield for adopting city ordinances to that effect. One of the primary goals of Sun Street Centers is to improve the health and safety of our neighborhoods through environmental and policy changes.

References: Office of National Drug Control Policy: Synthetic Drugs (a.k.a. K2/Spice, Bath Salts, etc.)

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