



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Frederick County Health Department

# Local Health Alert

**July 19, 2018 - The Frederick County Health Department has learned from multiple sources that residents consuming “SPICE”, or synthetic cannabinoids, are suffering severe reactions. These reactions have included loss of consciousness, vomiting, and seizures. Please alert anyone you know that may be using “SPICE” of this update.**

*From the CDC about the potentially harmful effects of synthetic cannabinoid use:*

**Synthetic cannabinoids can cause severe illness and death.**

Synthetic cannabinoids can affect brain function. Signs and symptoms include:

- Agitation and irritability
- Confusion and concentration problems
- Hallucinations, delusions, psychosis,
- Suicidal thoughts, and violent behavior
- Seizures
- Sleepiness and dizziness

**Synthetic cannabinoids can cause other health problems:**

- Breathing problems
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Heart attack, fast heart rate,
- High blood pressure and stroke
- Kidney failure
- Muscle damage

These health problems depend on many factors, including the specific synthetic cannabinoid, the dose (how much), and the duration of use (for how long). The long-term effects of long-term synthetic cannabinoid use are unknown.

**Synthetic cannabinoids may be addictive, since some people have reported withdrawal symptoms after heavy use over a long time.**

If you suddenly stop using synthetic cannabinoids, you may have the following symptoms:

- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Severe anxiety
- Sweating
- Trouble sleeping
- Breathing problems
- Chest pain
- Palpitations
- Rapid heart rate
- Seizures

Experts think that the severity of these symptoms is related to how much synthetic cannabinoid is used and for how long.

**If you or anyone you know becomes sick after using synthetic cannabinoids, seek immediate medical attention. Call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.**

There is no specific antidote for synthetic cannabinoids, but health care professionals can provide supportive treatments, such as oxygen, intravenous fluids, and medications to control seizures, agitation, and nausea.