



New Psychoactive Substances (synthetics)



The attention given to New Psychoactive Substances or NPS by the media has raised the curiosity of some people in the community. These drugs can be purchased online and through some shops and it is this easy availability that is of concern.

However the National Drug Strategy Household Survey conducted by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare in 2013, found that only 0.4% of Australians aged 14 years and over reported ever having used NPS at some stage in their lives.

So what are they? It's a difficult question to answer due to the composition of these drugs. Generally NPS are drugs that are designed to mimic and produce similar effects to some illicit drugs such as cannabis, cocaine, LSD and ecstasy.

Other names for NPS

Synthetic drugs, legal highs, NBOMe, herbal highs, party pills, synthetic cocaine, synthetic cannabis, herbal ecstasy, bath salts, room deodorisers, aphrodisiac tea, social tonics, plant fertiliser, herbal incense, new and emerging drugs (NED), N-BOMs and research chemicals.

Are they legal?

No. In WA they are all illegal under the *Misuse of Drugs Amendment (Psychoactive Substances) Bill 2015*. The makers of these drugs manufacture new chemicals to replace those that are already banned and continue changing the chemical structure of the drugs to stay ahead of the law. The laws about NPS differ between states and between state and federal law. Many drugs that were previously sold as legal are now banned under various state and federal laws including some synthetic cannabinoids such as Kronic.

Are they safe?

There is little known about the harm potential of NPS. Often young people believe that because NPS are advertised as legal or synthetic that they are safer to use. These drugs are unregulated and untested. Each batch may be a very different product given that the chemicals in these drugs are constantly changing to stay ahead of the law. The packaging of these drugs is often misleading and doesn't list all the ingredients or the correct amounts.

It can be difficult for medical practitioners to treat someone who has overdosed or has health problems as a result of using NPS as they do not know what is in the product.



For more information about New Psychoactive Substances (synthetics) head to:

Australian Drug Foundation www.adf.org.au

The author acknowledges that this fact sheet was adapted from New Psychoactive Substances (Synthetics) produced by Australian Drug Foundation