

WARNING ON SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Information

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OKLAHOMA CITY – Synthetic cannabinoids, sometimes referred to as “Spice,” “K2” or “fake weed,” have recently been linked to a number of severe adverse effects, including two deaths. Though the cases have occurred primarily in Illinois, additional cases have been identified in Missouri, Wisconsin, Indiana and Maryland. These products are sometimes used as a substitute for marijuana, but are actually a mixture of shredded plant materials sprayed with chemicals that are untested, and in many cases unknown. In the Illinois cases, several samples of the product have been found to contain brodifacoum, a rat poison that causes severe bleeding.

The packaging for these products is often misleading, and the listed ingredients don’t necessarily represent what’s in the package. It is important to understand these products are not “all natural,” as is often claimed, and contain chemicals and possibly contaminants that can cause a wide range of effects, including agitation, hallucinations, kidney damage and seizures.

“Although we have not had any calls related to the situation in Illinois, we are closely monitoring the situation and remind the public that if you experience any symptoms such as easy bruising or bleeding to contact the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information at 1-800-222-1222 immediately,” says Scott Schaeffer, the center’s managing director. “Health care providers seeing patients with unexplained bleeding should contact the Oklahoma Center for Poison & Drug Information for treatment recommendations and toxicological consults,” Schaeffer added.

Pharmacists and registered nurses at the poison center are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (800) 222-1222. Please do not email the poison center or a member of the poison center staff, as poisoning emergencies are not handled through email. The Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy at the OU Health Sciences Center. For more information, visit OklahomaPoison.org.

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