

SYNTHETIC CANNABIS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

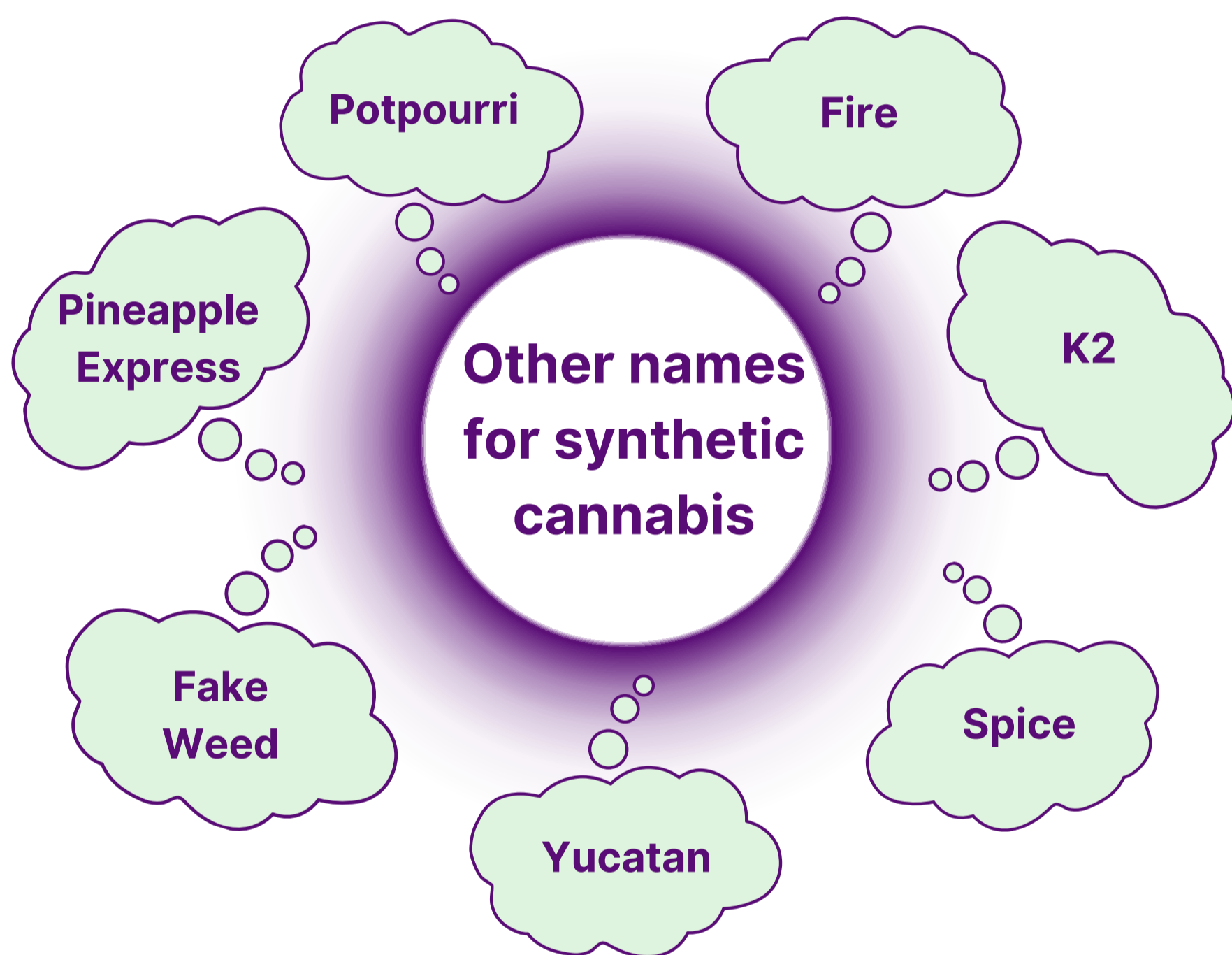
What is it?

Synthetic cannabis is psychoactive



Synthetic cannabinoids are chemicals that are created in a lab to mimic the effects of natural cannabis. They are part of a group of drugs called new psychoactive substances (NPS). They are not the same as THC, which is the active ingredient in natural cannabis.

NPS are not safe and can be much more **potent** and have **side effects that are more severe** than natural cannabis. Synthetic cannabis is **illegal**.



How is it used?

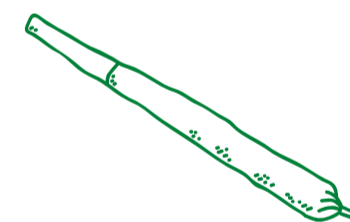
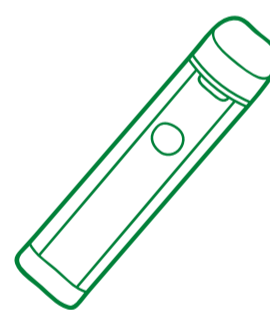
Synthetic cannabis is used similarly to regular cannabis, but it is most commonly smoked.

Oral:

Edibles (e.g. gummies, drinks, chocolates, and more)
Capsules, tablets, oils

Inhaled:

Vape, smoke, dab



What are the effects?



Synthetic cannabis has stronger psychoactive effects compared to natural cannabis.

It has a higher risk of causing paranoia, hallucinations, and agitation. It may even cause seizures.

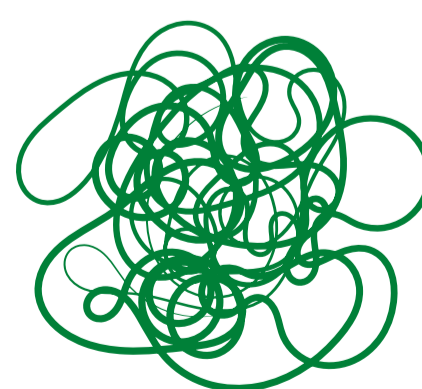
Synthetic cannabis causes senses to be felt differently, such as taste, touch, and hearing. It may also cause numbness.



Synthetic cannabis can cause a rapid heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and tingling.

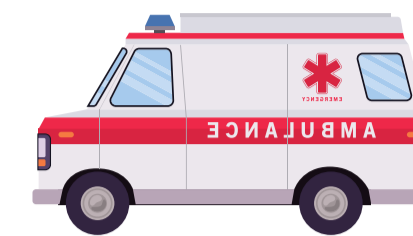
Withdrawal from synthetic cannabis is more intense than natural cannabis. It may cause agitation, psychosis, and mania requiring hospitalization.

Regular cannabis use may worsen symptoms for individuals with mental health disorders or a family history of such conditions.



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When do you seek emergency help?



Overdose or poisoning with synthetic cannabis is more severe than natural cannabis.

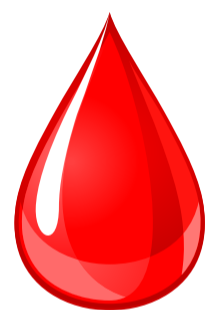
Signs: Intense anxiety, hallucinations, agitation, nausea and vomiting, unconsciousness, seizures, stroke, and coma.

Get help right away! Synthetic cannabis overdoses/poisonings can lead to damage to organs (e.g. heart, kidneys, liver, and brain).

Did you know?

A common contaminant of illegal synthetic cannabis is brodifacoum - a type of rat poison.

Brodifacoum causes life-threatening bleeding by stopping blood clotting!



What's In Your Spice?

Synthetic cannabinoids are created in a lab, but that doesn't mean they're safe.

Most illegal labs do not have **health and safety requirements** or **quality control**. There are **hundreds** of synthetic cannabinoids with unpredictable potencies and safety profiles. Unrelated chemicals may also get mixed in.

It's hard to know for sure what you're getting when you use illegal synthetic cannabis.

Learn more about ways you can stay safe when using cannabis: **Canada's lower-risk cannabis use guidelines**

For more information visit us at:
www.DECYDE.ca

How to stay safer?



Not using cannabis is the best way to stay safer and avoid harms.

If you still decide to use cannabis, consider these harm reduction strategies:

1

Timing matters: Avoid using cannabis before school, work or driving, as it impairs concentration and reaction time.

2

Plan for Safety: Ensure you have a designated ride and consider carrying condoms if sexual activity may occur.

3

Don't use alone. Always have a buddy with you, and check in with friends to make sure they get home safely. Share your location with someone you trust.

4

Choose legal, natural cannabis. They have a more predictable effect, and a lower risk of dependence, and harmful contaminants. [Click here](#) for a list of cannabis retailers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

5

Start Low & Go Slow: Try a small amount and wait to feel the full effects. Choose products with a lower amount of THC and an equal or higher amount of CBD.

6

Moderate Use: Use in moderation to prevent brain fog and potential strain on relationships.

7

Be Mindful of Inhalation: Avoid inhaling smoke deeply or holding your breath, this can harm your lungs.

8

Don't Mix (Cross-Fading)! Mixing synthetic cannabis with other substances has a high risk of accidental poisoning and injury.

These documents are intended to support educators in their delivery of drug education. They are not for direct student use unless deemed developmentally appropriate.

References:
1. Fischer, B., Robinson, T., Bullen, C., et al. (2022). Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG) for reducing health harms from non-medical cannabis use: A comprehensive evidence and recommendations update. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 99(2022). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2021.103381>
2. Wang, G.S. (2023). Synthetic Cannabinoids: Acute Intoxication. *UpToDate*. Retrieved on September 24 2023 from <http://www.uptodate.com>.
3. Grigg, J., Manning, V., Arunogiri, S., & Lubman, D. I. (2019). Synthetic cannabinoid use disorder: an update for general psychiatrists. *Australasian psychiatry: bulletin of Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists*, 27(3), 279-283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1039856218822749>
4. Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. (2014). CCENDU Bulletin: Synthetic Cannabinoids in Canada. *CCSA*. Retrieved on September 24 2023 from <https://www.ccsa.ca/synthetic-cannabinoids-canada-ccendu-bulletin>
5. Cooper Z. D. (2016). Adverse Effects of Synthetic Cannabinoids: Management of Acute Toxicity and Withdrawal. *Current psychiatry reports*, 18(5), 52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-016-0694-1>