

## Emerging Drugs: Factsheet



### Evidence ratings:

This resource has undergone expert review. See our [Help/Q&A section](#) for more details.

**Year:** Year 9–10, Year 11–12

**Targeted Drugs:** Emerging Drugs (“Legal Highs”)

**Tags:** synthetic drugs, bath salts, plant food, K2, spice, kronic, meow meow, rapture

**Time Allocated:** Partial lesson (under 45mins)

**Origin:** Australian

**Cost:**

Free

### Attachments

[📄 New Psychoactive Substances: Detailed Resource \(for Parents/Teachers\)](#)

## What are Emerging Drugs?

In recent years, many ‘new’ drugs have arrived on the market. These are often advertised as ‘legal highs’, despite the fact that in many cases they are not legal. These substances are also marketed as ‘synthetic drugs’, ‘party pills’, ‘research chemicals’, or ‘plant food’, and are often used instead of other illegal drugs. They are sometimes sold in stores or online and marketed as ‘legal’ and ‘safe’. However, many contain ingredients that are actually illegal and can be very dangerous.

**Most of these new psychoactive substances are illegal, or are quickly made illegal, because of health risks.**

Continual changes to these products make it hard to know what they contain, what the effects will be and what potential impact they make have on users in the short and long term. Current substances include:

Type of Substance	Examples	Street Names	Attempt to copy the effects of
<b>Synthetic Cannabinoids</b>	“Herbal Smoking Blends”	K2, Spice, Kronik, Northern Lights	Cannabis
<b>Synthetic Cathinones</b>	Mephedrone Methylone MDPV	Meow Meow, M-Kat M1 Ivory Wave, Bath Salts	MDMA/Ecstasy, methamphetamine
<b>Synthetic Piperazines</b>	BZP, TFMPP	A2, Rapture	MDMA/Ecstasy, methamphetamine, hallucinogens
<b>Substituted Phenethylamines</b>	2C-x family: 2C-I, 2C-B NBOMe family: 25I-NBOMe, 25B-NBOMe, 25C-NBOMe. DOI 6-APB	Trypstacy, Bromo, TWO’s N-Bomb Death on Impact Benzo Fury	MDMA/Ecstasy, methamphetamine, hallucinogens
<b>Dissociative Anaesthetics</b>	Methoxetamine	MXE, Moxy	Ketamine
<b>Substituted Tryptamines</b>	5-MeO-DMT	Foxy	Hallucinogens

One pill (or package) may contain a mixture of different things. New drugs are sold under many other names, including ‘Infinity’, ‘Benzo Fury’ and ‘Diablo’. There are many different names and these change frequently. Users can never be sure what they’re getting as the packaging doesn’t guarantee what’s inside.



## What are the effects of Emerging Drugs?

Taking these is like a roll of the dice — they haven't been around long enough to know what the immediate risks are or what might happen in the long run to people who use them. However, it is known that a small number of people have died from using some types of new drugs.

The effects of new drugs can be immediate or long-term, as listed in the table below.

### Immediate

- Increased heart rate and body temperature
- Enlarged pupils
- Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')
- Twitches and tremors
- Aggressive behaviour
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness and headaches
- Confusion
- A 'comedown' (see [glossary](#) of terms)
- Insomnia
- Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't really there)
- Overdose
- Serotonin syndrome (see [glossary](#) of terms)
- Paranoia and psychosis
- Seizures.

### Long Term

*Early information from research suggests that these new drugs may lead to a range of problems including:*

- Dependence (addiction)
- Memory problems
- Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened)
- Psychosis (see [glossary](#)).

## Evidence Base

This factsheet was developed following expert review by researchers at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney, the National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, and the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University.

**Download attachment** for more information and a list of sources.

- Credit to [2and2](#) for You never know what's in a pill infographic

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