

“Bath Salts” (MDPV)

A new synthetic drug known as “bath salts” has arrived on the drug scene. It’s being sold over the internet and in convenience stores, gas stations, gift shops, tobacco stores and other local establishments under such brand names as “Ivory Wave”, “Vanilla Sky”, “Red Dove”, “Zoom”, “Bloom”, “Cloud Nine”, “Blue Silk”, “Ocean Snow”, “White Lightening”, “Scarface” and “Hurricane Charlie”. The packages are labeled “bath salts” and “not for human consumption” but are being promoted and used as cocaine substitutes. They sell for approximately \$15-\$50 for a small bag or jar. There are reports that other products containing the same drug are being sold as “insect repellent” or “plant fertilizer”. Poison centers in the U.S. received 291 calls on “bath salts” and related products/drugs in all of 2010, but answered 318 calls in the first five weeks of 2011. Many of the initial cases were concentrated in a few states such as Louisiana, Florida and Kentucky, but poison centers in 33 states and the District of Columbia have also received calls. So far, the Maryland Poison Center has received fewer than five calls concerning “bath salts”.

The most common substance identified in these products is 3,4-methylenedioxypropylamphetamine (MDPV), a norepinephrine and dopamine reuptake inhibitor that produces amphetamine-like effects. Other substances such as mephedrone and derivatives of cathinone, all stimulants, reportedly may be found in the products. Most of the cases presenting to emergency departments involve snorting the powder, but the drug can also be ingested, smoked or injected. Users have developed tachycardia, hypertension, agitation, delirium, paranoia and psychosis. There have been several cases in which users have attempted to inflict injury on themselves or others. The agitation and delirium may persist for days and could require large doses of benzodiazepines.

At this time, “bath salts” and MDPV are legal in most states. Louisiana and Florida were the first states to enact emergency legislation to classify MDPV as Schedule 1 and ban the products. Legislators in other states have introduced bills to make them illegal. A federal bill to ban bath salts is likely to be introduced.

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DID YOU KNOW THAT... the ban on “bath salts” in some states has resulted in fewer cases being reported to poison centers?

The Louisiana poison center alone has received more than 200 calls on “bath salts”. The number of calls to that center dropped immediately after the emergency action took effect on January 6, 2011. They handled only 11 calls about “bath salts” in January after the ban, including eleven days in a row without a single call. Emergency departments and law enforcement agencies also reported significantly fewer cases after the legislative ruling. Likewise, a decrease in poison center calls in Florida has been seen after instituting legislative action there.



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