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Community Services

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Did You Know ?

March is ...

...National Caffeine
Awareness Month

...Sleep Awareness
Week (March 7th — 13th)

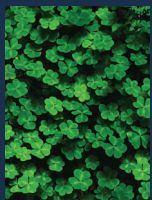
...National Inhalants and
Poisons Awareness
Week (March 15th—21st)

...National Youth
Violence Prevention
Week (March 21st—25th)

...the 2nd is Read
Across America Day

...the 13th is the start of
Daylight Saving Time

...and the 17th is
St. Patrick's Day AND
Absolutely Incredible
Kid Day!



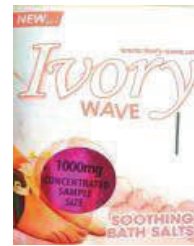
March is Poison Awareness Month. Even though many parents know that substances like household cleaners can be poisonous, they may not know about new poisons that are an emerging threat to teenagers in the United States: synthetic marijuana and fake cocaine. These drugs are man-made and legal in some states, and many teenagers think they are a safe alternative to drugs. However, synthetic drugs may be just as dangerous as the real drugs.



Teens may refer to synthetic marijuana as K2 or Spice. Fake marijuana is made by spraying herbs with chemicals that mimic the chemical THC that is found in marijuana. Synthetic marijuana is produced in Asia, and it can be purchased on-line, at gas stations, and at convenience stores. Fake marijuana is usually advertised as “herbal incense.” The biggest problem with fake marijuana is that you never know exactly what you’re getting. The ingredients are not regulated, so there is no list of ingredients on the package. For this reason, other poisonous chemicals may be added to the herbs, the amount of chemicals in the package is unknown, and the exact ingredients may vary between packages. Fake marijuana has caused many people to experience severe, even life-threatening, side effects. Teens who smoke fake marijuana expect that the drug will give them the same high as marijuana. They may think that it will help them to relax or mellow out, but it may actually cause heart palpitations, panic attacks, hallucinations, delusions, vomiting, severe agitation, and dilated pupils. The drug is also linked with many recent head injuries, as people who smoke the drug often pass out quickly and hit their heads. One teenage boy was even in a coma from smoking synthetic marijuana.

Synthetic cocaine may be even more dangerous than synthetic marijuana. Synthetic cocaine can also be purchased on-line and in gas stations, and it is marketed as “bath salts” or “plant food.” The

drug goes by the street names Ivory Wave, Cloud 9, White Lightning, Hurricane Charlie, Scarface, White Dove, Bath Salts, or Charge.



Users may take the drug expecting to experience a cocaine-like high, but the effects are even worse. Fake cocaine is made of a variety of chemicals. The main ingredient is MDPV, which is a chemical that is similar to those found in cocaine and methamphetamine. Like fake marijuana, synthetic cocaine is unregulated, so you never know what the ingredients in the package really are. Chemicals may be added to the package, making it especially dangerous. For this reason, synthetic cocaine can cause insomnia, hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, rapid heart-beat, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. The withdrawal symptoms are just as bad; they include depression, anxiety, headaches, muscle pain, and stomachaches. People who have taken especially high doses of fake cocaine have reported being unable to sleep for days and having extreme psychotic symptoms that require them to be hospitalized. The drug is even being investigated for causing a number of suicides and deaths throughout the United States, and recent research suggests that fake cocaine may be even more addictive than the real substance.

This month, let’s debunk the myth that synthetic drugs are safer than the real drugs. Talk to your teen about the problems with synthetic drugs and point out their dangerous side effects. Help your teen to prepare responses in case someone offers them a synthetic drug. For example, they could say, “No way. Do you even know what’s in that stuff?” or “I don’t want to end up in the psych ward.” Make sure that your teen understands that man-made drugs are just as poisonous and harmful as the real things.

Submitted by:
Katie Blackburn, Prevention Intern
Adapted from:
http://articles.cnn.com/2010-03-23/health/synthetic.marijuana_1_k2-russian-roulette-synthetic-marijuana?_s=PM:HEALTH
“Fake Cocaine: Crazy for a High” brochure

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Ask Dr. Mom

Dear Dr. Mom,
 My children have set rules when they are at my home, but do not have rules when they visit their Dad (e.g., no set bed time, no limitations on television viewing, etc). Should I be able to have a say in this? How do I talk to him about setting similar limits when they visit him? How do I explain to them the importance of rules?
 - Frustrated Single Mom

Dear Frustrated Mom-
 It's not uncommon that differences in parenting

styles often become glaringly obvious after separation or divorce. Children, depending on their age, usually experience some transition time to get used to the differing rules and routines of each household. Ultimately, all you're really able to control is being clear about the expectations you have for your children and being consistent with them. You have little control over what happens "over there" at your ex's house, unless there is reason to believe your children's lives are in danger. It may help to try and set up a discussion with your ex to talk about the transition between houses. It is important to approach this discussion with the intention of

seeking cooperation. Try to leave out any editorializing or judgments and focus on the effects you see on the children. Perhaps you can say something like, "When the kids come back to my house, they seem to be overtired and they often have a hard time getting up for school the next day. How can we address this issue?" This opens the door to open communication and problem-solving. Remember that you must also be open to feedback from your ex on what's going on at your house as well. Part of having an effective communication with your ex includes you listening to his concerns as well.

- Dr. Mom

Focus On

TEEN SLEEP NEEDS

Parents know that teens *love* to sleep. But some may not know how important sleep is for teenagers' development. Regardless of age, our bodies and brains do important jobs while we sleep. Not getting enough sleep can lead to moodiness the next day, weight gain, and sickness. People who drive while drowsy cause about 100,000 crashes each year. Sleep is even more important for teenagers. The teenage body and brain

are changing as much as they did during infancy. All this growing requires a lot of sleep! Teens need 9 hours of sleep each night to grow healthily and avoid weight gain, irritability, sickness, and even pimples. Sleep also helps teens pay attention at school and get better grades. With homework, sports, and Facebook, it can be hard to find 9 hours to sleep! Teens should avoid exercising and drinking caffeine around bedtime. They should only use their beds for sleeping, not for homework or while watching TV. An evening routine

will also help teens sleep better. Parents can also help their teens get enough sleep. Perhaps you might agree that your teen can sleep until noon on Saturday instead of until 8 AM, but then they must do their laundry or other chores before hanging out with friends. When your teen gets enough sleep, your whole family will be happier!

Submitted by:
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 Adapted from:
 The National Sleep Foundation



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