

INFORMATION YOU CAN TRUST FROM THE FALMOUTH PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP



SCOOBY SNAX COMES TO FALMOUTH!

(This article was published in the Falmouth Enterprise on March 22, 2013)

And no, I do not mean Scooby-Doo, the famous animated dog featured in several television series and movies dating back to 1969.

Scooby Snax is one of many products sold as “fake” marijuana, which according to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) is a mixture of herbs and spices sprayed with a synthetic compound chemically similar to THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. Scooby Snax and similar brands of “fake weed” is usually purchased in tobacco shops, convenience stores, gas stations, and over the Internet. I

What’s In a Name?

These synthetic drugs are typically sold in foil packets or silvery plastic bags of dried leaves and often marketed as incense or potpourri. These products are sold under such names as Spice, K2, Legal Devil, LOL, Scooby Snax, the Presidential, Demon, and Tsunami, and come in such flavors as grape, mango, strawberry, apple and watermelon.

“Fake weed” is usually smoked in joints or pipes, but some users make it into a tea.

A Google search brings up hundreds of sites where these synthetic drugs can be purchased starting at around \$16.00. One site selling Scooby Snax has the following disclaimer: “Scooby Snax Herbal Incense is intended only to be used as an aromatic potpourri only. It is not designed or intended for human consumption. Both the manufacturers and retailers of this product take no responsibility for the incorrect use or misuse of this product. This is 100% legal in 50 states.”

A Chemistry Experiment in Your Teen’s Body

All of these drugs are dangerous and can have significant effects on your teen’s mind and body.

Side effects of “fake weed” include hallucinations, a rapid heart rate, elevated blood pressure, vomiting, agitation, seizures, mood swings, paranoia, panic attacks, tremors, dizziness, perception disorders, loss of physical control and psychotic behavior.

Some of the chemicals present in “fake weed” may be stored in the body for long periods of time, and therefore the long-term effects on humans are not fully known.

Despite unpleasant and sometimes frightening side effects, the cravings can be intense and many users remain addicted to the drug.

Buying “fake weed” on the Internet can be especially dangerous because it may not be known where the products come from or what type or amount of chemical has been used.

A Growing Problem

According to the DEA, more than 100 different synthetic cannabinoid compounds are in circulation. In 2011, the synthetic herbal incense trade was a \$7.6 billion industry, and growing. The large profits from sales, plus the fact that these products can be easily made and changed to stay one step ahead of federal, state, and local law enforcement, means there is little incentive to stop making and selling “fake weed.”

According to a 2011 study by the University of Michigan, 11.4% of high school seniors admitted to using synthetic marijuana in the past year.

Parents should talk to their teens about the dangers of these products and the potential short-term and long-term health risks.

Recommended Resource

Office of National Drug Policy: ONDCP, a component of the Executive Office of the President, advises the President on drug-control issues and coordinates drug-control activities and related funding across the Federal government. The site has a wealth of information about the substance abuse problem in the U.S.

(www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp)

For more information, visit the partnership’s website at: www.falmouthprevention.org.

This article was written by Dr. Bihari, a pediatrician, chairperson of the Falmouth Prevention Partnership Steering Committee, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Community Health Center of Cape Cod.