

Wisconsin Crime Prevention Practitioners Association

Emerging Drug Threats

Designer drugs and their harmful consequences are evident throughout the state! While the US has been fighting the war on drugs for years, local police agencies are answering the call to equip our communities with education and resources to ensure health and safety.

The following bulletin contains information on some of these unique and new tactics in the drug and alcohol market. Some of the products are illegal and some have no regulations or restrictions on their use. All are reason for the community to be concerned!

Many of these products have surfaced in retail stores throughout Wisconsin. We are asking for YOUR help in this effort!

Synthetic Cannabinoids

What is it? These are a marijuana-like product that is made of synthetic cannabinoids. It is made by spraying the chemical compounds on leaves or herbs. The product is marketed and sold as incense or potpourri, and is ingested through smoking. These products have shown up locally, being sold in various retail outlets under a variety of names such as: *Purple Magic, Red Dragon, Green Dragon, and King Weedy.*

Why the concern? Synthetic cannabinoids activate the same receptors in cells of the brain and the body that the active ingredient in marijuana, THC, does. They can actually activate these receptors more effectively. A person under the influence of synthetic cannabinoids will appear as someone using marijuana (red eyes, lethargy, etc.).

What is being done? Effective March 1, 2011, the DEA implemented an emergency order banning the sale and possession of this product until further research can be done. Many communities across Wisconsin, including many in Winnebago County have passed ordinances against synthetic cannabinoids. In July of 2011, Wisconsin passed a new law banning the sale and possession of these products.



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Bath Salts

What is it? The active ingredients in this product are stimulants that are said to cause a “meth-like” high. The product is sold online and through various retailers as “bath salts” under a variety of names including: *Ivory Wave*, *Vanilla Sky*, and *Red Dove*. The actual substances in the product have absolutely nothing in common with **actual** bath salts. “Bath salts” are snorted, injected, or smoked.

Why the concern? Similar to synthetic cannabinoids, the marketing scheme for these products is such that labeling them “*not for human consumption*” allows for the circumvention of any regulations. Poison control centers across the United States have reported a drastic increase in calls regarding the use of “bath salts”. The product has caused hallucinations, paranoia, rapid heart rates, and suicidal thoughts.

What is being done? A bill has been introduced at the federal level to ban the sale and possession of these products. Several states have already banned the product. In July of 2011, Wisconsin joined those states when it passed a law banning the sale and possession of these so-called bath salts.



Marijuana Soda

What is it? A California based company has created a new drink that combines soda and THC (the main active ingredient in marijuana). The soda has been introduced in Colorado and California— states that have allowed medical marijuana.

Why the concern? The soda contains 35 to 65 milligrams of THC. The product line is being marketed towards the mainstream or trendy and promises “12 mind blowing ounces”. These types of gimmicks and packaging appeal directly to our youth.

What is being done? Presently, there are already state and federal laws prohibiting the possession and sale of products containing THC. Persons in states that allow for medical marijuana use would be able to use this with a valid prescription. Wisconsin does not have such a law and possession of any product containing THC is illegal.



Lazy Cakes, Downie Brownie

What is it? A brownie that is flavored with herbal relaxation blends such as melatonin, valerian root extract, rose hips extracts and passion flower. The brownies are marketed as a “tasty chocolate treats that bring on the ultimate state of relaxation.”

Why the concern? These are all legal ingredients, however melatonin is the one causing concern. Melatonin is a naturally occurring hormone that controls sleep and wake cycles. Melatonin can be taken as a supplement due to its relaxing properties which can be useful in treating sleep disorders. There’s approximately eight milligrams of melatonin in each of the ‘cakes.’ One serving, or half a brownie, is more than the recommended dose.

What is being done? As with the other food products, there is not much oversight or regulations on this product. Several communities across the United States are presently researching banning the sale of this product.



Whip its

What is it? These are small steel cylinder or cartridges that are filled with nitrous oxide. They are sold for a variety of legitimate purposes such as model rocket engines or as a whipping agent for whipped cream dispensers.

Why the concern? These items contain nitrous oxide, which is best known as “laughing gas”. Nitrous oxide is primarily used by dentists to keep patients comfortable during painful procedures. It is also used by recreational drug users as an inhalant for its psychoactive effects. Nitrous oxide replaces oxygen in the body, which can cause respiratory problems and potentially brain damage. Because the effects of a single "hit" last only three minutes or so, some abusers inhale the gas many times over the course of a few hours. Such attempts to maintain a nitrous high can be fatal.

What is being done? Wisconsin does have a state law that makes it a felony for the delivery or attempted delivery of nitrous oxide to anyone under 21 years old.



Drug Paraphernalia

What is it? There are many products readily available that make it easier for people to use illegal drugs. Many of these products are associated with smoking and include a variety of pipes and bongs. Other items include cutting/grinding instruments and measuring scales.

Why the concern? These items, without the presence or connection to illegal drugs, are perfectly legal to sell. Many retailers and distributors market these items for “tobacco use only” or they are “masked” as other legitimate items when they are clearly associated with the drug trade. Many times these products are located on store counter tops and are readily accessible to anyone, including our youth.

What is being done? Presently there are federal, state and local laws prohibiting the possession of these items when drugs are present or that connection is made. Awareness and education campaigns targeting parents along with retailers and their customers are being conducted throughout Winnebago County.



Four Loko and Joose

What is it? These products are an energy infused alcohol drink. The name "Four" in *Four Loko* is derived from the drink's original four main ingredients: alcohol, caffeine, taurine, and guarana. This combination of stimulants, caffeine and alcohol is very powerful and the product has been referred to as “blackout in a can”. The product is sold at various liquor stores.

Why the concern? When alcohol and caffeine are combined, drinkers have reported a reduction of the sensations typically associated with alcohol; this is believed to be a result of caffeine counteracting the depressive effects and keeping the individual more alert. However, when the caffeine wears off the person feels the full effects of the alcohol. This can lead to excess consumption of alcohol because the delayed feeling of drunkenness leads an individual to seek additional alcohol to obtain the same sensations as those found in previous encounters.

What is being done? In 2010, the FDA issued a letter to manufacturers citing that adding caffeine to alcohol beverages is an “unsafe food additive” and declared that any such beverages cannot stay on the shelves in their current form. The manufacturer has now launched a reformulated version, *Four Loko XXX*, without the caffeine or stimulants.



Whipahol, Cream, Whipped Lightning

What is it? These products are alcohol-infused whipped cream. The ingredients include grain alcohol, sugar, heavy cream, natural & artificial flavors and sometimes coloring. The alcohol dessert is available in many flavors, and can contain up to 33% proof alcohol. A can of beer is approximately 3-4%.

Why the concern? The combination of alcohol and whipped cream makes it attractive to our youth. This combination can also lead to excessive consumption. The high concentration of the alcohol, as compared to other drinks, is alarming.

What is being done? There has not been any action towards the product yet; however, it is a food additive mixed with alcohol, which is generally unsafe according to the FDA. In Wisconsin, these products are food which means that they are not regulated as other alcohol products and their sale cannot be limited to those over 21.



Cough Syrup

What is it? Dextromethorphan (DXM) is a cough-suppressing ingredient found in a variety of over-the-counter cold and cough medications. Like PCP and Ketamine, dextromethorphan is a dissociative anesthetic, meaning DXM effects can include hallucinations. DXM can be found in many cough syrup and cough and cold tablets or gel caps that are available without a prescription.

Why the concern? Common DXM effects can include confusion, dizziness, double or blurred vision, slurred speech, impaired physical coordination, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, rapid heartbeat, drowsiness, numbness of fingers and toes, and disorientation. DXM abusers describe different “plateaus” ranging from mild distortions of color and sound to visual hallucinations and “out-of-body,” dissociative, sensations, and loss of motor control.

What is being done? Presently there are no restrictions on the sale or use of products containing DXM. Awareness and education campaigns targeted at parents and youth about the abuse of DXM is being conducted throughout Winnebago County.

