What are Synthetic Psychoactive Substances?

These are a large and growing group of manufactured chemicals. They are often more risky than the traditional drugs they mimic.

During use, it can make you feel:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relaxed OR Energetic and talkative</th>
<th>Headrush</th>
<th>Distant/disconnected</th>
<th>Difficulty talking</th>
<th>Anxious</th>
<th>Loss of co-ordination</th>
<th>Looping and out of control thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paranoia</td>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Vomiting</td>
<td>Muscle spasms</td>
<td>Passing out</td>
<td>Psychosis</td>
<td>Seizures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you know?

Some synthetics speed up body functions (usually pills or powders), some slow them down (usually smoked) and some cause hallucinations.

Afterwards, signs of a comedown can be:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Feeling anxious</th>
<th>Urinating a lot</th>
<th>Low mood</th>
<th>Exhaustion</th>
<th>Difficulty sleeping</th>
<th>Stomach upset</th>
<th>Irritability</th>
<th>Paranoia</th>
<th>Strong craving</th>
<th>Difficulty concentrating</th>
<th>Numbness in hands and feet</th>
<th>Body aches</th>
<th>Aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If someone is experiencing:

A fast or irregular heartbeat
Difficulty breathing
Extreme agitation and paranoia
Loss of consciousness
Seizures
Foaming at the mouth

Then:

Call 111
Stay with them
Find a safe place to calm down
Reassure them
Lie them on their side with open airways

This can last several days
Be safer when using by:
- Planning where and who you are using with and your come down
- Using a small amount first to check strength and effect
- Stopping if you start to feel unwell or uncomfortable
- Only carrying as much on you as you intend to use
- Avoiding mixing with alcohol, medication or other drugs
- Avoiding while pregnant

Look after yourself by:
- Taking a break
- Catching up on sleep and food

Consider making changes if:
- Using and come downs affecting relationships, study or work
- Unpleasant effects outweigh the pleasant effects

Get support to make changes if:
- Spending more time/money than you want on these substances
- Always thinking about the substances
- Others are concerned about your use
- Engaging in criminal activity

Seek professional help if you or someone you know is:
- Using more to get the same effect or feel “normal”
- Finding it hard to stop using
- Experiencing withdrawal symptoms or physical problems (e.g. vomiting blood, feeling unwell, poor appetite, pain)
- Having suicidal thoughts

For support and information contact: Alcohol Drug Helpline Txt 8681 Call 0800 787 797 drugfoundation.org.nz optforwellbeing.org

ABOUT SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Ata haere i a ko e hōpara i te ao
Take care as you explore the world