

Spice Warning

10th June 2020.

Increased risk of 'Spice' overdose in Greater Manchester

Spice

- **Spice is a nickname for a herbal smoking mixture containing one or more of a group of drugs called synthetic cannabinoids.**
- The potency of Spice varies between bags as a different dose of synthetic cannabinoids may have been used in the mix.
- There are also hundreds of different synthetic cannabinoids used in 'spice mixes' - some are more dangerous than others.

60 people died last year after smoking Spice, often when using other drugs at the same time.

There has been a recent increase in Spice overdoses in Greater Manchester. This may be because the synthetic cannabinoids used have changed, or more of it has been added to the Spice mix. If your use of Spice has decreased during lockdown, your tolerance will also have dropped making your chances of overdose much more likely.

Ideally given the potential harm that spice can cause our general advice would be that it is best not to take the drug. However we have provided the harm reduction advice below to protect people who may put themselves at risk.

Harm reduction advice

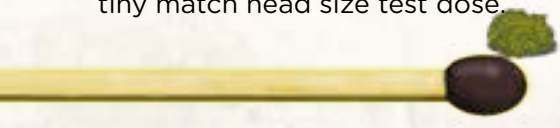
- Sit down before you smoke Spice as you may lose your balance, fall over or pass out.
- Spice is potent even at very low doses.
- Don't smoke Spice neat, always mix with tobacco.
- Start any new batch with a tiny match head size test dose.

Help available

- There are various treatments for Spice users including medically assisted withdrawal.

There are free and confidential services in every area of Greater Manchester who may be able to help.

Speak to any professional and they will be able to put you in contact with your local drug treatment service.



Dealing with a Spice overdose



Although effects can look disturbing in the vast majority of cases people smoking Spice will not require emergency treatment, however:

- **If in doubt**

Call an ambulance.



- **Bad trips:** If someone is hallucinating, paranoid or anxious, take them somewhere quiet where they feel safe.

Calm and reassure them.



- **Seizures (fits):** Ensure the area is safe and there is nothing they could hurt themselves on. Don't hold people down as this is dangerous:

Call an ambulance.



- **Overheating:** If they are flushed and skin feels very hot ($+ 38.5^{\circ}\text{C}$) Rest and cool. Use damp cloth on skin and drink water. If not settling after about 5 minutes: **Call an ambulance.**



- **If they have chest pains:** sit them down in a calm environment and reassure them. **Call an ambulance.**



- **Other concerns:** e.g. severe vomiting, frothing at mouth, severe headache, significant agitation or aggression, not settling within 15 minutes.

Call an ambulance.



- **Breathing difficulties,** such as fast or shallow breathing, not settling within 5 minutes. **Call an ambulance.**

- **Unconsciousness:** It can be risky to startle or frighten people intoxicated on Spice as this can lead to heart failure. If they can't be woken by gentle shaking and calling; make sure they are lying on their side so they don't choke on vomit and **Call an ambulance.**



Look after people who have overdosed in the same way you would want them to look after you.