SYNTHETIC CANNABINOID E-LIQUIDS

CNAPA
Centre National de Prévention des Addictions

What are synthetic cannabinoids?

Synthetic cannabinoids are chemically produced substances designed to produce effects in the body similar to those of THC (the active ingredient in cannabis).
But be cautious: they are not comparable to natural cannabis. Their effects are much more powerful, unpredictable, and significantly more dangerous.
E-liquids containing synthetic cannabinoids differ from other synthetic cannabinoids in the way they are consumed (vaping via an e-cigarette) and in the substances they contain.

What are synthetic cannabinoid e-liquids?

- These are liquids for electronic cigarettes to which synthetic cannabinoids have been added.
- Consumption via vape / e-cigarette
- Often contain very potent substances
- Often sold as a "legal alternative to cannabis" — which is false: they are illegal
- Effects: very strong, very fast, very risky
- High risk of overdose, loss of consciousness, and psychological crises

Why are synthetic cannabinoid vapes consumed?

Myth:

LEGAL?
This is not true!

UNDETECTABLE ?
Many synthetic cannabinoids are detectable!

OFTEN SOLD AS CBD?
False: CBD does not get you high

Fact:

CHEAP AND EASY TO OBTAIN
E.g. on the internet, on the black market

VERY INTENSE EFFECTS
But with equally high risks

Why is it so dangerous?

- No quality control — the composition is constantly changing
- Impossible to know what the product actually contains
- Even very small amounts can be dangerous
- Much more potent than THC, with more side effects

Common side effects:

- Vomiting, sweating
- Anxiety, paranoia, psychosis
- Circulatory problems, heart rhythm disturbances
- Seizures, respiratory problems
- Blackouts
- Sudden loss of consciousness ("passing out"), coma
- Can lead to addiction
- Can be fatal — especially when combined with alcohol or other drugs

Harm reduction advice:
(if use still occurs)

No form of consumption is truly risk-free, but these tips can help reduce harm:

- Have the substance tested — for example, at pipapo.lu
- Keep the dose very low— inhale for 1 to 2 seconds, then wait at least 15 minutes
- Do not trust labels or sellers
- Do not take another dose straight away — effects may be delayed
- Do not mix with alcohol, medication or other drugs
- Never use alone — a sober person must be present
- Set & setting are even more important than with "traditional" THC, as the effects are much harder to control:
  - Do not use if you are experiencing psychological distress, depression, anxiety, or psychosis
  - Use in a safe place: not on the street, not on a balcony, etc.
- Keep the emergency number (112) in mind and be ready to provide first aid
- Avoid long-term use — rapid tolerance and risk of dependence

Can e-liquids containing synthetic cannabinoids be deadly?

There are regular reports of severe intoxications, hospitalizations, and even deaths linked to the use of vapes containing synthetic cannabinoids — sometimes from the very first use.
The danger increases significantly when used in combination with other substances (e.g. alcohol or medications), when the composition is unknown, or if no help is available in case of an emergency.

Conclusion

- E-cigarettes containing synthetic cannabinoids are not a harmless vaping experience.
- They are a risky chemical cocktail: cheap, potent, and dangerous.
- Anyone who uses them should be aware of the risks.

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