

K-2

K-2 is known as a new incense blend which has a distinct high, very euphoric, and almost mimics the high of marijuana. An Associated Press report said the K-2 blend is a mixture of herbs and spices applied with a synthetic chemical compound similar to THC, the active ingredient in marijuana. Commonly labeled as “incense,” the substance gives the person a high by smoking it.¹

Origin of K-2:

K-2 was first created in the mid-1990’s in the lab of organic chemist John W. Huffman of Clemson University, who studies cannabinoid receptors. He is not sure how the recipe for what is named JWH-018 (his initials) got picked up, but he did publish details on a series of compounds including JWH-018 in a book chapter. Even before the book came out, he recalls learning that in China and Korea people were selling the compound as a plant growth stimulant. Huffman thinks it was first used somewhere in Europe as a recreational drug. “Apparently someone got the idea of doping this incense mixture with the compound and smoking it,” Huffman told LiveScience. “You can get very high on it. It’s about 10 times more active than THC,” the active ingredient in marijuana. This means that you can smoke a lot less K-2 to get just as high as marijuana.²

K-2 goes by the names of fake weed, spice, K-2 spice, K-2 summit, Genie, Zohai, and various other names. The use of the K-2 mixture, sold in health stores and herbal shops, is growing among young people because it is legal, it’s readily available, it produces a high similar to marijuana, and it is reportedly “natural.” Teens, therefore, believe the fake weed is safe; but Dr. Anthony Scalzo, Professor of toxicology at St. Louis University and Director of the Missouri Regional Poison Control Center, has reported 30 cases in which teens were reporting symptoms after smoking K-2. These symptoms included:

- Hallucinations (can be intense)
- Severe agitation
- Vomiting
- Elevated heart rate (tachycardia – in the range of 110-150 beats/minute)
- Elevated blood pressure (in the 140-160/100-110 range)
- Tremors and seizures (central nervous system)
- Anxiety
- Numbness and tingling

Dr. Scalzo said the plant mixture is sprayed with the psychotropic drug JWH 018, which is certainly not “natural.” But Scalzo also thinks K-2 is also contaminated with an unknown toxic substance that causes many of the symptoms that he has seen in teens. These toxic chemicals are neither natural nor safe.³

Both Mr. Huffman and Dr. Scalzo agree the drug is dangerous.²

¹<http://what is K-2.blogspot.com>

²http://news.yahoo.com/s/livescience/20100304/sc_livescience/fakeweed
& Jeanna Bryner, LiveScience Managing Editor at LiveScience.com, 3/4/10

³<http://alcoholism.about.com/b/2010/03/09/something-else-for-parents-to-worry-about>