

Did You Know?

What activities can I do?

TRENDS

STATISTICS

AN INFORMATION BOOKLET ON

STAYING FREE FROM

NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

What resources are there?

How can I start a conversation on this?



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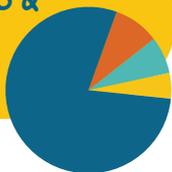
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STATISTICS &
TRENDS



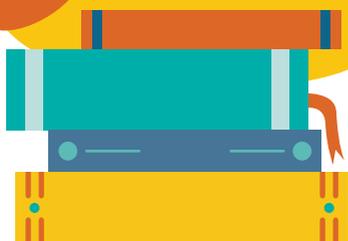
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FOREWORD

*In Singapore,
NPS is one of
the three most
abused types
of drugs
since 2018.*

The global New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) situation remains challenging. Based on a report released in April 2021 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, there were at least 1,000 individual NPS reported by 126 countries and territories as of December 2020, and new variants can be easily produced by introducing slight modifications to the chemical structures of existing NPS.

The abuse of NPS can cause adverse physical and psychological reactions, including paranoia, seizures, hallucinations and even death. These include variants of chemically altered MDMA*, methamphetamine, ketamine, LSD^ and synthetic cannabinoids.

In Singapore, NPS is one of the three most abused types of drugs since 2018. In 2019, NPS overtook cannabis as the second most commonly abused type of drugs amongst

new abusers arrested locally. This remains an area of concern.

The Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) regularly reviews its strategies to improve the detection and regulation of NPS, including the listing of new variants as controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA). While a significant proportion of the NPS reported overseas are currently already listed under the MDA, it remains a challenge as perpetrators constantly come up with variants that are yet to be listed, so as to evade control.

To address these challenges, we continue to strengthen our laws to allow CNB to take decisive actions against the abuse and trafficking of a wider range of NPS and newer, synthesised drugs that are beginning to surface in other parts of the world.

“It is important to guide our youths towards making the right choices and leading a drug-free, healthy lifestyle.”

It is important to guide our youths towards making the right choices and leading a drug-free, healthy lifestyle. I hope this information booklet can equip persons of influence with factual information about NPS, so that we can build a drug-free society together, where everyone can live, work and play safely.

Mr Ng Ser Song
Director
Central Narcotics Bureau

*MDMA: methylenedioxymethamphetamine
^LSD: lysergide

#DidYouKnow

?

WHAT ARE NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS)?



New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) refer to substances that mimic the effects of controlled drugs such as cannabis, cocaine, “Ecstasy”, methamphetamine or heroin. They are produced by introducing slight modifications to the chemical structures of existing NPS and controlled drugs to create new variations that are not yet controlled. Some common names include “Spice”, “K2”, “bath salts”, “Kronic”, “Mushroom” and “synthetic weed”.

WHY ARE NPS DANGEROUS?

NPS are usually marketed as “legal highs” as they may yet to be controlled by the authorities which gives the wrong impression that they are safe to consume, though they are not.

On the contrary, NPS are illicit in nature, and are known to be abused recreationally, clandestinely manufactured and associated with overdose fatalities or adverse reactions. There is generally a lack of information regarding their pharmacological effects and toxicities.

References for toxicology effects

- 1 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2020). *NPS: New psychoactive substances* [Brochure]. https://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/NPS-Leafllet_WEB_2020.pdf
- 2 Drug Enforcement Administration. (2011). *Drugs of Abuse: A DEA Resource Guide*. U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.hsdil.org/?view&did=690750>
- 3 Global SMART Programme. (2013). *The challenge of new psychoactive substances*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.
- 4 European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. (2017). *Perspectives on drugs: Synthetic cannabinoids in Europe*. https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/27398/1/POD_Synthetic%20cannabinoids_0.pdf

In Singapore, NPS may be found in “smoking blends” which are botanical materials coated with NPS, or in tablets that are sold as “Ecstasy”.

NPS have **unknown, dangerous toxicology effects**, and are as addictive and harmful as controlled drugs. Abuse can lead to:



Severe intoxications¹



Severe toxic reaction leading to death¹



Paranoia²



Hallucinations^{2,3}



Adverse cardiovascular problems³

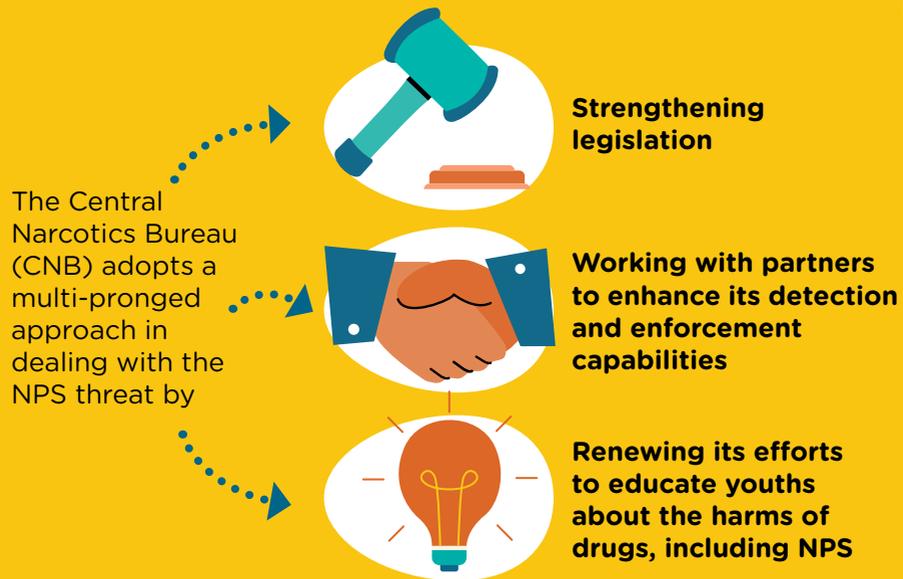


Renal failure³



Seizures^{3,4}

SINGAPORE'S POSITION AND APPROACH ON NPS



CNB regularly reviews its strategies to improve the detection and regulation of NPS. This includes the regular listing of NPS that have emerged in the global market with no licit uses. A significant proportion of the NPS reported overseas, even though they have not been detected locally, are currently listed as controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA).



LEGISLATIVE POWERS TO TACKLE NPS

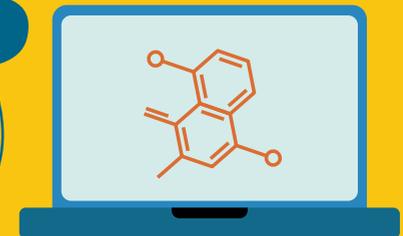


2010

In 2010, Singapore listed three NPS as controlled drugs under the MDA, the first time that such a listing was done for NPS. However, listing individual NPS under the MDA laws can be a lengthy procedure and may not be a fitting response to the fast-paced nature of the NPS market.

Thus, in May 2013, a generic listing approach was introduced, which allowed CNB to control a large number of closely related substances that share the same core molecular structure and substitution patterns.

2013



2021

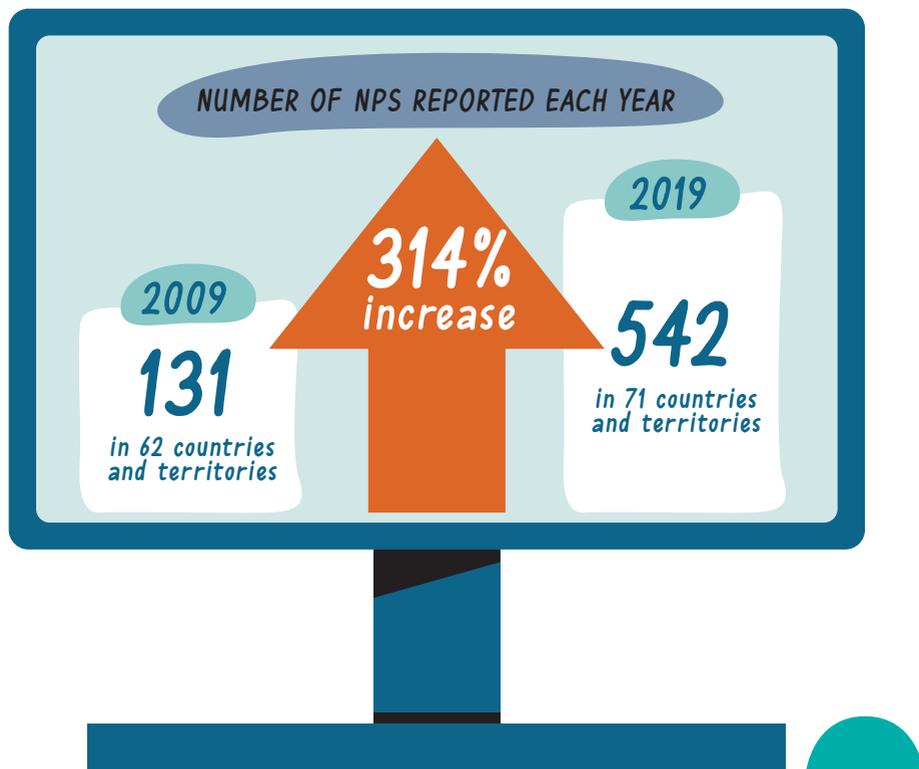
As of 1 May 2021, Singapore has listed another 13 NPS as Class A controlled drugs. There are now 12 generic groups and 80 individually named NPS currently listed under the MDA. This allows CNB to take action against any activities involving a wide range of new, synthesised substances as the trafficking, manufacture, import, export and possession of these substances will constitute as offences under the MDA.



STATISTICS & TRENDS

Global Trends

Based on a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report dated April 2021, as of December 2020, a total of 1,047 individual NPS were reported to the UNODC by 126 countries and territories.



NPS first emerged in Europe in 2004 and have since grown in variants. Between 2012 and 2014, substances reported for the first time were mostly synthetic cannabinoids.

MOST OF THE SYNTHETIC NPS IDENTIFIED GLOBALLY (2009-2019)*



Stimulants
(Mostly cathinones and phenethylamines)

Synthetic cannabinoids

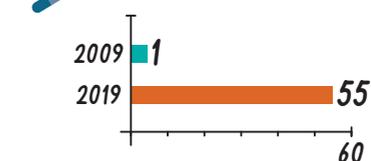


Hallucinogens
(Mostly tryptamines)

*According to the World Drug Report 2020

Of concern is also the sharp increase, in relative terms, in the number of opioid NPS reported annually.

Number of opioid NPS[^] reported annually



[^]Includes fentanyl analogues and new chemical classes of synthetic opioids. These have proven to be particularly harmful, leading to NPS-related deaths, particularly in North America and, to a lesser extent, Europe.

However, the World Drug Report 2021 highlighted that the number of NPS found at the global level has been stabilising in recent years. Quantities of synthetic NPS seized have also declined, including synthetic cannabinoids. National and international drug control systems have succeeded in containing the spread of NPS in high-income countries where different types of legislation have been applied.

OVERVIEW OF SINGAPORE'S DRUG SITUATION IN 2020*

NEW DRUG ABUSERS ARRESTED



TOTAL DRUG ABUSERS ARRESTED

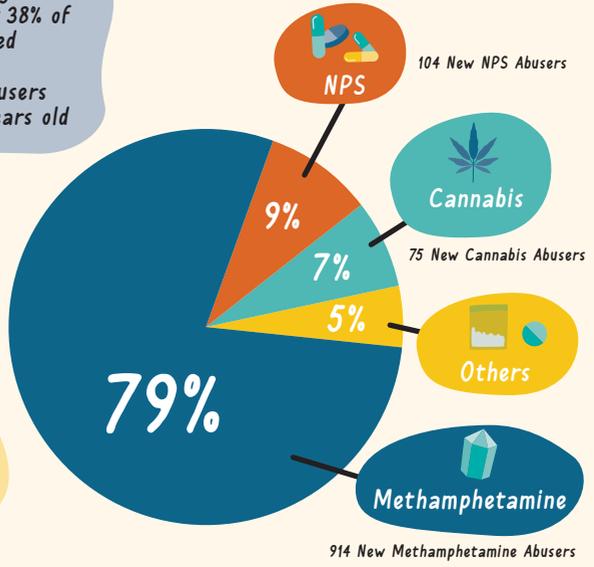


i Proportion of new drug abusers arrested remained high at 38% of total drug abusers arrested

About 62% of new drug abusers arrested were below 30 years old

NEW ABUSERS BY DRUG TYPE

Methamphetamine, NPS and cannabis were the three most commonly abused drugs by new drug abusers arrested in 2020



*The latest annual statistics are available at www.cnb.gov.sg.



TIPS

Do you know the tell-tale signs that your students/children are abusing drugs, and how you can help them avoid these dangers? Here are some ways you can engage them:

KNOW THE SIGNS



Hangs around with a different group of friends



Sudden drop in school grades



Exhibits extreme mood swings



Displays poor body coordination



Has bloodshot/sunken eyes



Skips school regularly

WAYS TO HELP YOUTHS STAY DRUG-FREE



Listen to them when they feel stressed and teach them coping skills. Suggest healthy group activities to widen their social circle.



Equip them with the skills to refuse drug offers. This may include decision-making skills to assess the consequences of the different opinions they will face, as well as creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

Find teachable moments to emphasise that substance abuse is not the right way to fit in.



Involve them in work that requires higher responsibility so that they are gainfully occupied and feel valued.

Develop their self-awareness so that they can recognise their own strengths and weaknesses. Give praise where it is due.



CONVERSATION STARTERS & ACTIVITIES

Below are some recommended activities to engage youths at different levels. Where suitable, you can consider engaging students in class discussions or friendly debates to discuss the topic of drugs in Singapore and have them conduct research to support their propositions.

For Primary Level

Pre-activity: Conversation starters

WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN SOMEONE OFFERS YOU DRUGS OR UNKNOWN SUBSTANCES?

HAVE YOU HEARD OF DRUGS?

HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT FROM MEDICINE?

WHAT ARE THEIR HARMFUL EFFECTS?

Activities



Design a poster on how to say 'No' to drugs. Examples:

- 1 I say 'No' to drugs because they make me fall sick easily.
- 2 I say 'No' to drugs by not mixing with bad influence.

Role Play: Take turns to play the role of 1) a friend who is introduced to NPS by friends outside of school; and 2) a friend who knows the harmful effects of drugs.



Consider the following:

- How would you dissuade your friend from taking drugs?
- How would you explain to your friend that it is okay not to succumb to peer pressure and that taking drugs does not make him or her look cool/grown-up?



Learn through play: Try out 'Drug Buster Buddies', an Augmented Reality mobile game application by CNB, and learn about the harmful effects of drugs through this interactive gameplay experience.



For Secondary Level

Pre-activity: Conversation starters

DO YOU HAVE FRIENDS WHO THINK LIGHTLY OF DRUG ABUSE? IF SO, HOW DO THEY SHOW IT?

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE ABUSE DRUGS?

Activities

Write down three **ways you overcome stress**. Share it with your partner/group.



Which **stress-coping techniques** do you identify with?

- **Problem-focused:** You tend to focus on solving problems by tackling the issue head-on, sometimes by breaking down the problem into smaller parts and addressing them bit by bit. You seek practical advice and solutions from a family member or close friend.
- **Emotion-focused:** You tend to adopt a positive mindset by seeing the good in a negative situation and seeking emotional support from others.
- **Disengagement:** You tend to give up, actively avoid the problem or choose to think about something else.

? #DIDYOUKNOW?
Adopting a variety of coping techniques is healthy. However, disengagement from major stressors in life will not solve your problem. Some may even turn to extreme or dangerous ways of coping by abusing drugs to distract themselves from the problem. Drugs do not solve your problem; on the contrary, they only add to your troubles.

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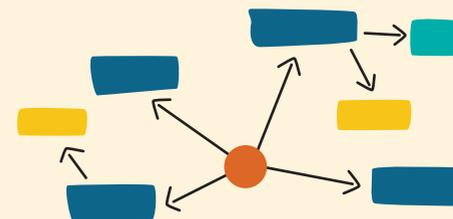


WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF DRUGS SUCH AS NPS?

WHAT KIND OF MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT DRUGS ARE PORTRAYED IN POP CULTURE/MEDIA?

Tips
Refer to pages 4-5 for some pointers and to pages 20 for a video that can be played as a preamble to the activity.

Celebrate life! Draw a **mind map** of things you like to do and/or would like to learn or do.



Role Play: Take turns to play the role of 1) a friend who is feeling stressed from the upcoming examinations and was persuaded by bad influence to take NPS; and 2) a friend who knows that drugs will not help relieve examination stress but will in turn lead to addiction.

Consider the following:

- Would you be able to stand up against bad influence and help your friends stay away from drugs?
- Would you know enough about the harmful effects of NPS to be able to guide your friend away from them?



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For Post-Secondary Level

Pre-activity: Conversation starters

WHY DOES SINGAPORE ADOPT A ZERO-TOLERANCE STANCE AGAINST DRUGS AND DRUG ABUSE?

DO YOU KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF NPS TO BE ABLE TO GUIDE YOUR FRIEND AWAY FROM THEM?

Tips
Refer to pages 4-5 for some pointers and to pages 20 for a video that can be played as a preamble to the activity.

HOW CAN WE TACKLE FAKE NEWS REGARDING DRUGS, E.G. THAT SOME DRUGS ARE NOT ADDICTIVE?

WHAT WOULD BECOME OF OUR SOCIETY IF DRUGS ARE LEGALISED IN SINGAPORE?

Activities



Debate/discuss the **socioeconomic and cultural consequences of drug abuse** in Singapore.



Write down **three ways to lead a drug-free lifestyle**. You can consider some activities you and your friends can engage in.



What creative **ways** could you use **to persuade your friend or a loved one against abusing NPS?**

Other recommended activities

Commemoration of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June) in schools:

- Primary and secondary level students can spend some time on the annual anti-drug ribbon folding activity and learn about the harmful effects of drugs.
- Post-secondary level students may consider working with CNB Communications Division on other commemorative projects.

Scan the QR code for a short video demonstration of the ribbon folding activity.



Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) lessons or after-school sessions:

Use this time to share useful information to increase students' knowledge, social and life skills, and refusal skills towards drug abuse. Read more about CNB's Preventive Drug Education (PDE) offerings in the next section and PDE messaging in the MOE syllabus in the "Resources" section.



Lesson plans and teaching aids:

These have been developed for educators and are available online (both on the CNB website and on the MOE's Discipline Resource Portal).



PREVENTIVE DRUG EDUCATION (PDE) OFFERINGS

? #DIDYOUKNOW? CNB has the following PDE offerings for educators, counsellors and parents, as well as students, to take an active role in keeping our young away from drugs.

General

- Monthly e-Newsletter (for teacher and parent advocates)
- Toolkit for educators, counsellors and parents)
- Information booklet *kNOW Cannabis* (for educators, counsellors and parents)
- Message Cards (for educators, counsellors and parents)
- Learning Journeys (for students, educators and counsellors)
- Talks (for students, educators, counsellors and parents)
- Interactive Skits (for students)
- Exhibitions (for students)
- Videos at CNB's social media handle @CNB.DrugFreeSG

Post-Secondary Level

- Anti-Drug Advocate (ADA) Programme
- Collaboration on anti-drug projects as part of course curriculum (e.g. final year projects)
- Collaboration on anti-drug activities
- Sponsorship of collaterals for activities with anti-drug elements

Pre-School and Primary Levels

- Interactive book *Be Careful, Max!* (for ages 4 to 6 years old)
- Activity book *Captain Drug Buster & Dr. Wacko: The Origin* (for ages 5 to 8 years old)*
- Illustrated book *Captain Drug Buster vs Dr. Wacko: The Final Showdown* (for ages 7 to 9 years old)*
- Anti-Drug Ambassador Activity (for ages 10 to 11 years old)
- 'Drug Buster Buddies' Augmented Reality mobile game application (for ages 7 to 12 years old)

Secondary Level

- Comic book *Captain Drug Buster vs Dr. Wacko: The First Encounter**
- Small group sharing sessions by ex-abusers (for vulnerable students)
- Augmented Reality exhibition
- After-School Engagement programme
- 'Conquer' board game

*Available at all school and public libraries.

Scan this QR code to find out more on the CNB website.



Resources

INFOGRAPHICS

? #DIDYOUKNOW? CNB has produced the following PDE resources to raise awareness about NPS and aid persons of influence such as educators, counsellors and parents.

NPS Mythbuster Series

- ✓ PRI
- ✓ SEC
- ✓ POST-SEC

SAME OLD, BRAND NEW DRUGS
IN SHORT, THE CHEMICALS IN THESE SUBSTANCES ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGED IN A CAT AND MOUSE GAME TO AVOID DETECTION

NPS ARE DESIGNED TO MIMIC THE EFFECTS OF CONTROLLED DRUGS
CLASSIC HALLUCINOGENS, OPIOIDS, STIMULANTS, SEDATIVES/HYPNOTICS, DISSOCIATIVES, SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

NPS AFFECT YOUR HEALTH IN WAYS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT
CARDIOVASCULAR PROBLEMS, SEVERE TOXIC REACTIONS, SEIZURES, PARANOIDA, OVERDOSSING, HALLUCINATIONS

WHAT YOU CAN BE SURE OF IS A LONG LIST OF SIDE-EFFECTS THAT CAN OCCUR, SUCH AS:

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT CHEMICALS YOU'RE INGESTING, AND HOW TOXIC THESE SUBSTANCES CAN BE.

FACT: NPS CONTAIN UNKNOWN TOXICITY LEVELS

FACT: NPS ARE A CATEGORY OF DRUGS THAT HAVEN'T BEEN TESTED YET - MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO KNOW WHAT DANGERS THEY POSE

MYTH BUSTED: NPS ARE MERELY DESIGNED TO MIMIC ILLEGAL DRUGS, THEIR ACTUAL CONTENTS ARE NOT KNOWN

Resources

VIDEOS



NPS Mythbuster Series

1:22 min

In this MythBuster series, we seek to uncover more facts about NPS. No matter how fancy NPS may sound, they all lead to the same grim fate.



go.gov.sg/npsmythbuster

✓ PRI ✓ SEC ✓ POST-SEC



A video sharing by an ex-abuser and a student

6:11 min

CNB collaborated with Team HBYP, winner of the DrugFreeSG Competition 2020 (Young Adult category) to produce a video interview of Matthew, an ex-abuser and Aqil, a student to share their thoughts on NPS and drug abuse.



go.gov.sg/npsmatthew

✓ SEC ✓ POST-SEC



What are new psychoactive substances?

2:57 min

A video by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) to explain NPS.



✓ SEC ✓ POST-SEC



Resources

ARTICLES OF INTEREST



Combatting the rising threat of new psychoactive substances

Source: TODAY

✓ SEC ✓ POST-SEC



Laws to be amended in first half of 2021 to allow swifter enforcement against new psychoactive substances

Source: The Straits Times Online

✓ SEC ✓ POST-SEC



Keeping ahead in detecting new generation of drugs in Singapore with names like Spice

Source: The Straits Times Online

✓ SEC ✓ POST-SEC



CNB seizes more than 1kg of psychoactive substances, some disguised as tobacco

Source: CNA Online

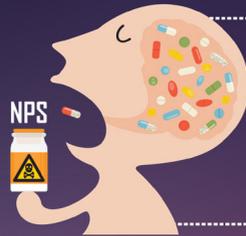
✓ PRI ✓ SEC ✓ POST-SEC

✓ SEC

✓ POST-SEC

LEGAL OR LETHAL?

All You Should Know About New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)



What are NPS?

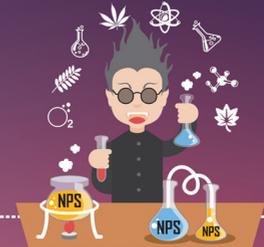
NPS contain ingredients that mimic the effects of controlled drugs. They have unknown and dangerous toxicology effects and are just as addictive and harmful as illegal drugs.

Over **100 NPS** listed as **Class A controlled drugs** as of 1 May 2015

Designer danger

Marketed by terms such as "legal highs", "designer drugs", they often have fanciful names to attract youths:

- Spice
- Bath salts
- K2
- Kronik
- Bromo-dragonfly
- Herbal incense
- Aphrodisiac tea
- Party pills
- White magic
- Kit-Kat
- Vanilla sky



NPS formulation/ingredients

The chemical composition of NPS is ever-changing. You simply have no idea what nasty chemicals or ingredients go into creating these substances!

Consequences of abusing NPS



Penalties of NPS

Trafficking	Imprisonment for a term of not less than 5 years and 5 strokes of the cane	Illegal Import or Export	Imprisonment for a term of not less than 5 years and 5 strokes of the cane
Illegal Manufacturing	Imprisonment for a term of not less than 10 years and 5 strokes of the cane	Illegal Possession	A fine not exceeding \$20,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years or both.
		Illegal Consumption	Imprisonment for a term not less than 1 year or committal to an approved institution for treatment and rehabilitation

Access the poster at go.gov.sg/npslegalorlethal.

✓ SEC

✓ POST-SEC

LOOKS CAN BE Deceiving DRUGS

It's 10pm on a Saturday. The night is still young as the streets begin bustling with life. Now that you are 18, your parents know that it is impossible to have you constantly by their sides.

Along with your BFFs and her friends, you settle for the trendiest night spot in town. Just then, Mandy whispers something in your ear.

CANNABIS?!" Startled, you exclaim, **"Of course not!"**

By now, you have heard a lot about the harms of cannabis and drugs alike. Your mind recounts the number of celebrities who have fallen victim to the drug scourge.

"What if it's not the real cannabis but a safer version? Legal and harmless." Mandy replies. You're surprised that such things exist and wonder if she's merely fooling around. Though you haven't heard about it, you're apprehensively curious.

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a packet of what seems like dried herbs, labelled 'K2'. Half-chuckling at your expression, Mandy waves the pack in your face as you zero in for a closer look. Somehow still sceptical, you shake your head.

Well done! You just saved yourself a whole lot of trouble because..

.. The stuff inside that packet is actually synthetic cannabis, also known as 'K2', 'Spice' or 'Fake Weed'. They belong to a class of drugs called New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), which are chemically modified to mimic the same effects as controlled drugs. **The biggest misconception about NPS is that they are safer than illegal drugs. They are not!**

Manufacturers and drug dealers often try to pass off NPS as harmless and legal. However, these chemically altered substances are especially harmful and addictive since users have no idea what chemicals or poisons they are ingesting! Mixtures of NPS bought

unknowingly by users have resulted in unpredictable and sometimes disastrous effects such as severe intoxications, paranoia, hallucinations, adverse cardiovascular problems, renal failures and seizures.

The take-home message here is – NPS use is illegal. In fact, since May 2014, the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) has listed NPS as Class A controlled drugs. This means that these substances are illicit and are no different from other controlled drugs like Cannabis, Heroin or Methamphetamine! Do not be misled by others who make false claims about these substances. Be informed, protect yourself by making the right choice.

OTHERS WILL SPREAD LIES ABOUT DRUGS JUST TO HAVE YOU HOOKED.

DO NOT BE FOOLED!

Access the poster at go.gov.sg/npslookscanbedeceiving.

PDE MESSAGING IN THE MOE SYLLABUS

? **#DIDYOUKNOW?** CNB has collaborated with the MOE to incorporate the following PDE messaging into the current syllabus:

Primary 4 and 5
Health Education textbook, *An Active and Healthy Me – Substances harmful to health*

Lower Secondary Science (Normal Technical)
textbook, *Science Around Us – What are drugs and their effects?*

Secondary 1
Character and Citizenship Education lesson plan – “In Control”

Secondary Science (Normal Technical) Anti-Drug Module – “Drugs and their effects” on the Student Learning Space (SLS)

OTHER RESOURCES

? **#DIDYOUKNOW?** There are also useful resources from the UNODC, which include:

“Listen First” campaign:
A science-based approach to drug prevention that advocates listening to children and youths as the first step to help them grow healthy and safe. Materials are available at <https://www.unodc.org/listenfirst>.



NOTES



#DIDYOUKNOW? The colours of the anti-drug ribbon, which is a green ribbon over a white one, represent ‘Health’, ‘Vitality’ and ‘Strength’.

Sources

- 1 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2020). *NPS: New psychoactive substances* [Brochure]. https://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/NPS-Leaflet_WEB_2020.pdf
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- 6 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2021). *Regional Diversity and the Impact of Scheduling on NPS Trends* (Global SMART Update, Vol. 25, April 2021). https://www.unodc.org/documents/scientific/GlobalSMART_25_web.pdf
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CNB
For a Drug-Free Singapore



Visit the CNB Website at www.cnb.gov.sg for more information on drugs and drug abuse, and to download a digital copy of this booklet.

CNB Hotline: 1800-325-6666



@CNB.DrugFreeSG