

# INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

AUGUST 31

# FACTSHEET NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

## WHAT ARE NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES?

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), also known as 'synthetic drugs' or 'legal highs' are chemicals which are made to act in a similar way to drugs like cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine or methamphetamine.

They come in different forms including:

- a) Powders / pills
- b) Synthetic cannabis (synthetic chemicals that have been added to herbal or plant material)

Although called 'new' some have been around for decades and are often sold as incense, bath salts, plant food or wrongly marketed as safer or legal alternatives to other illicit drugs.

## MISCONCEPTION ABOUT THEIR LEGAL STATUS

In attempts to stay ahead of, or get around the law, NPS have been changed so often and new substances made that it

is practically impossible to know what is in what you are taking.

Laws regarding NPS may be different depending on where you are in the world but even NPS bought from regulated licenced sources can be dangerous. Buying them from the internet or from unregulated sources can be very risky as even if it has 'legal' on the packet there is no guarantee that what's in the packet is legal or safe.

For example, two products, each sold as synthetic cannabis may be completely different chemicals from each other and have nothing in common with cannabis or even the ingredients written on the packets.

NPS have been linked to deaths in the United Kingdom, Europe and America and Australia.

## SIGNS OF OVERDOSE

The effects of NPS vary from substance to substance and so may signs of overdose.

Some signs of overdose can include:

PHYSICAL SIGNS		PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNS
Rigid muscles / spasms	Difficulty / stopped breathing	Confusion or distress
Shaking / shivering	Can't be woken up	Paranoia, fear and panic
Fever / overheating	Seizure	Agitation and aggression
Nausea or vomiting	Difficulty breathing	

More information and fact sheets can be found at [www.overdoseday.com](http://www.overdoseday.com)

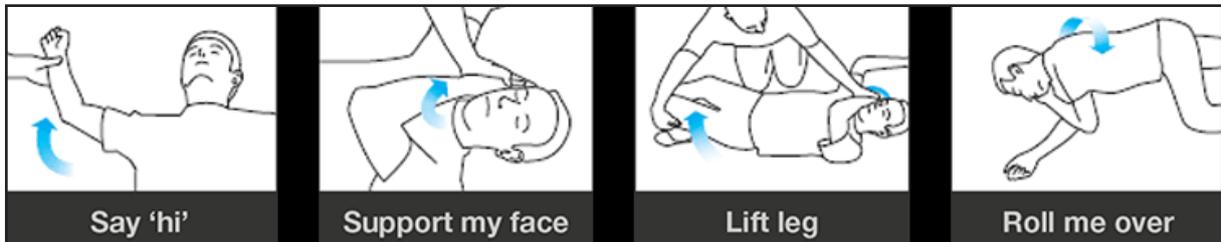
# INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

AUGUST 31

## OVERDOSE RESPONSE

If you think someone has overdosed, please consider the following:

- Before you act, check for dangers such as needles
- Seek medical attention
- If confused or panicking, try to reassure the person
- Maintain calmness in the area
- If overheating, try to cool them down by loosening outer clothing or putting a wet towel on the back of the neck or under their arms
- If you can't get a response, put them in the recovery position



Source: <http://www.prenoxad injection.com/>

---

## WHAT NOT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A SUSPECTED OVERDOSE:

- Do NOT leave the person alone
- Do NOT give the person anything to eat or drink, or try to induce vomiting



More information and fact sheets can be found at [www.overdoseday.com](http://www.overdoseday.com)