

“Bath Salts” Frequently Asked Questions

What are “bath salts”?

“**Bath salts**” is a “designer drug” that has been recently become available. This is a powerful drug that causes severe side effects. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in the New Orleans area has confirmed that much of the supply is coming in from China and is distributed to head shops, convenience stores and through the Internet. This drug is not useful as a bath product.

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) reports a surge of emergency department visits across the state related to the recreational use “bath salts” beginning in fall of 2010, with at least one suspected death. Most were young adults in their 20’s to 30’s.

How are “bath salts” packaged?

“Bath salts” are sold as crystalline powder in a small bag with names, such as Ivory Wave, Blow, Red Dove, Vanilla Sky, Aura, Zeus 2, Zoom, Bliss, Blue Silk, White Lightning, Ocean, Charge, Cosmic Blast, Scarface, Hurricane Charlie, Cloud 9, Energy 1, White Dove, and others.



What do “bath salts” contain?

This product can contain one of many “designer drugs”. The most likely one currently used is MDPV (methylenedioxy pyrovalerone) but it could also contain mephedrone (a Khat derivative).

Photo Source: Gulf Coast HIDTA

Are “bath salts” legal?

No. Bath salts, and specifically the ingredients MDPV and mephedrone are Schedule I drugs in Michigan which makes them illegal to sell or use. Nationally, the federal Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) is moving to place these chemicals on Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). Currently, DEA has determined that because MDPV is an analogue of a drug that is on Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA), “law enforcement cases involving MDPV can be prosecuted under the Federal Analogue Act of the CSA.”

What is the pattern of abuse?

Most users are experienced drug users/abusers. Their ages range from 15 – 61 years. Some binge for 3-4 days. “Bath salts” are snorted, ingested mixed with water, injected, or inserted rectally or vaginally. There is craving for more once the binge is over.

What are the signs/symptoms of “bath salts” use?

Use of “bath salts” causes severe symptoms. Side effects include:

- severe paranoia
- violent behavior
- hallucinations
- chest pain
- seizures
- decreased need for sleep
- lack of appetite
- self-mutilation

Users frequently describe the high as “horrible” and report seeing demons, monsters, foreign soldiers or aliens. Some have symptoms for 2-3 days. Some require long term psychiatric care because their symptoms weren’t improving.

Are there long term health problems that result from use of “bath salts”?

Yes. Even a one-time use of this drug can cause long term health effects including:

- kidney failure
- liver failure
- increased risk of suicide
- long term mental illness
- self-mutilation
- death

What should health care providers do if they receive patients who are “bath salt” users?

MDCH has provided a fact sheet for physicians on its website, www.michigan.gov/substanceabuseepi. MDCH no longer mandates health care providers to report suspected cases to the Michigan Poison Control Center (PCC); however voluntary reporting of cases to the PCC is encouraged. Go to the above website for further information call the PCC at 1-800-222-1222 .

Where can you get more information?

Call the Michigan Department of Community Health hotline, 1-800-MI-TOXIC (648-6942), the Michigan PCC at 1-800-222-1222, or visit www.michigan.gov/substanceabuseepi.