

Bath Salts and Other Synthetic Stimulants

A Guide for Talking to Youth

What are Bath Salts?¹:

- The drugs in the recent news called ‘Bath Salts’ are NOT the products that are commonly used in households for bathing.
- These products are comprised of chemicals that mimic cocaine, LSD, ecstasy, and/or methamphetamine. They are often labeled “Not for Human Consumption” to avoid needing to be approved by the FDA so there is no oversight of the manufacturing process.
- These synthetic drugs are being marketed as common products such as ‘bath salts’, ‘jewelry cleaner’ or ‘plant food’. They are also marketed under names such as “Ivory Wave”, “Purple Wave”, “Vanilla Sky” “Bliss” or “Monkey Dust.”
- They are man-made synthetic drugs that usually have at least one of these three synthetic stimulants: (Mephedrone; MDPV [3,4 methylenedioxypropylvalerone] and/or Methylone).
- For more information:
<http://www.maineosa.org/irc/pubs/DrugFactSheets/bath%20salts.pdf>

They are Illegal:

- Laws have been enacted by the State of Maine and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).
 - On September 28th, 2011, Maine Governor Paul LePage signed into public law a measure which makes possession and trafficking of the drug illegal with consequences of fines and jail time.²
 - The DEA emergency measure goes into effect in October: Except as authorized by law, this action will make possessing and selling these chemicals (or the products that contain them) illegal in the U.S. for at least one year while the DEA and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) further study whether these chemicals should be permanently controlled.¹

Substance Abuse Prevention for Schools and Communities

The most successful prevention programs are included as part of comprehensive school health education. Research proves that “one shot” lessons or activities are not effective in helping to keep students safe and healthy. Prevention must be age-appropriate, culturally-appropriate, congruent, and consistent with other school curricula.

An effective school-based prevention program (as defined by the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s Preventing Drug Use among Children and Adolescents) should include:

- Multiple years of programming
- Interactive methods
- Development and practice of skills: social skills, decision making, stress management, assertiveness, peer resistance, media literacy, and communication
- Anti-drug social norms
- Peer-to-peer activities
- Risk factors
- Increased protective factors

Staff training is critical; a program can be successful only when educators understand the topic and have the skills needed to present it effectively. Review, repeat, reinforce, and practice skills and behaviors as often as possible, several times each school year. This builds students’ abilities and reinforces attitudes and values for personal health and safety.

It is important to teach the same concepts several different ways and to discuss drug related issues at various times during the school year when “teachable moments” present themselves. (*NIDA, Preventing Drug Use Among Children and Adolescents*)

For Elementary Age Children:

- Ask what they have heard about drugs or respond to their questions about bath salts.
- Explain any misconceptions that they may have about the product.
- Avoid telling them how the product is abused.
- Explain that the bath salts drug is not what someone uses to bathe. It is an illegal drug that is a poisonous chemical to the body.
- Explain that they should only accept items from a parent or trusted adult.
- Let them know they can ask you questions and if they need help to talk to a trusted adult.
- Monitor your children's activities and get to know their friends and their parents.

Before you address youth, think about:

- What age are you targeting?
- What types of messages do you want to give them?
- What information should you avoid?
- Who should give the information?

For Middle School Age Children:

- Ask what they have heard about bath salts.
- Explain any misconceptions that they may have about the product.
- Avoid telling them how the product is abused.
- Explain that the bath salts drug is not what someone uses to bathe. It is an illegal drug that is a poisonous chemical to the body.
- Tell them that bath salts are a drug which can be very harmful to their body and can alter their brain. The use of bath salts can bring on agitation and/or hallucinations which may cause a person to harm themselves or others. However, the long term side-effects of bath salts are not known.
- Let them know they can ask you questions and if they need help to talk to a trusted adult.
- Monitor your children's activities and get to know their friends and their parents. Monitor their use of computers and cell phones.
- Be clear about your family's rules about substance use including the consequences.

For High School Age Children:

- Avoid telling them how the product is abused.
- Explain that the bath salts drug is not what someone uses to bathe. It is an illegal drug labeled ‘bath salts’ and is a poisonous chemical to the body.
- Tell them that bath salts are a drug which can be very harmful to their body and can alter their brain. The use of bath salts can bring on agitation and/or hallucinations which may cause a person to harm themselves or others. The long term side-effects of bath salts are not yet known.
- “These chemicals act in the brain like stimulant drugs (indeed they are sometimes touted as cocaine substitutes); thus they present a high abuse and addiction liability.” (*Message from the Director (of NIDA) on Bath Salts- Emerging and Dangerous Products*)³
- Let them know they can call a parent or trusted adult whenever safety is an issue.
- Be clear about your family’s rules about substance use including the consequences.
- Monitor your teen’s activities and get to know their friends and their parents. Monitor their use of computers and cell phones.
- Most teens have heard about drugs; make sure they get the message that these products are poisonous to their bodies.
- Describe how substance abuse can get in the way of their hopes and dreams.
- Emphasize that substance abuse interferes with school and learning.
- Highlight short-term negative effects on relationships with family and friends.

Additional Resources about Synthetic Stimulants

¹DEA Emergency Ban: <http://www.justice.gov/dea/pubs/pressrel/pr090711.html>

²Maine Law (September 28, 2011):

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/LawMakerWeb/summary.asp?LD=1589>

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1192&item=3&snum=125>

³National Institute on Drug Abuse “Message from the Director on Bath Salts- Emerging and Dangerous Products” Accessed 10/11/2011

<http://drugabuse.gov/about/welcome/MessageBathSalts211.html>

Recognize & Respond to Someone using “Bath Salts” MaineGeneral Overdose Prevention:

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/osa/irc/pubs/DrugFactSheets/EasyMGBathfinal2011.pdf>

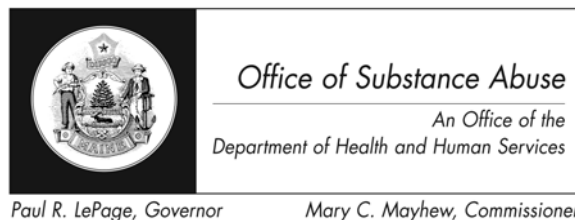
Some material for this document was adapted from:

Maine Inhalant Abuse Prevention Workgroup, (2007) “Inhalant Abuse: It’s Right Under Your Nose,” PowerPoint presentation.

National Institute on Drug Abuse, (2003) Preventing Drug Use among Children and Adolescents: A Research-Based Guide for Parents, Educators, and Community Leaders 2nd Ed. NIH Publication No. 04-4214(A)

Virginia Department of Education (2001) “Inhalant Prevention Resource Guide”:

<http://www.inhalants.org/Inhalantbook.pdf>



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