

**FACT SHEET**

# New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

## WHAT ARE NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES?

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) produce the same, or similar effects, to drugs such as cocaine and ecstasy but, have been created so that their chemical structure is designed not to be controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971).

NPS are commonly referred to as "Legal Highs", so give the impression that they are legal and safe for use. This is NOT always the case. The New Psychoactive Substances Act came into effect in May 2016 and prohibits the production, supply, import or export of psychoactive substances\*.

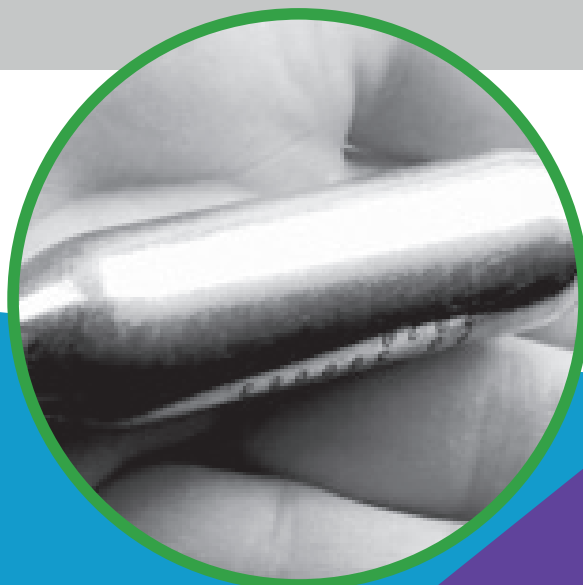
\*There are some exemptions such as alcohol and nicotine. For more information visit: [gov.uk/government/collections/psychoactive-substances-bill-2015](http://gov.uk/government/collections/psychoactive-substances-bill-2015)

## GETTING HELP

If you know that someone has taken a New Psychoactive Substance and is having a bad reaction, try to keep them calm and get them home safely. If they are in a bad way, try to find out what has been taken and call 999 for medical help.

Be honest with emergency services about what has been taken. This will mean that treatment can be given more quickly.

If someone you know has difficulties with the use of NPS, please seek specialist help.



**For more  
information on  
NPS, please visit  
[talktofrank.com](http://talktofrank.com)**

## WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

NPS come in many forms – powders, pills, tablets, liquids, canisters or in herbal mixtures. As with illegal drugs, substances can often come in more than one form.

### Bright and colourful packaging

Many NPS are sold in bright, colourful packaging and are often advertised as plant food, fish food, incense, or room odourisers.

**NPS can also be sold under the chemical name, or with a confusing label of a mixture of letters and numbers.**

The word 'Not for human consumption' and 'Not for under 18s' often appear on packaging.

The listed ingredients on the packaging are often not the same as what the packet actually contains; some contain illegal drugs too.



## SIDE EFFECTS OF USE

The effects of using a NPS vary depending upon the type used, and how much has been taken. Because many psychoactive substances are so new, there is little information on the side effects of using NPS.

It's very hard to know the effects of NPS, even if they've been taken before, as these products are constantly changing.

**It's difficult to know exactly what you are taking.... and so, it's also difficult to know how to treat unpleasant side effects.**

**Stimulant type NPS** may have similar effects and risks to drugs such as cocaine and amphetamines; but they may also have severe come downs.

**Depressant type NPS** slow your central nervous system down and can make you unsteady.

**Hallucinogenic type NPS** may give similar effects to LSD but are usually much stronger.

With **Synthetic Cannabis**, there have been reports of breathing difficulties, vomiting, rashes and increased risk of a heart attack.