

MEMORANDUM

To: Illinois Hospital Emergency Department and Urgent Care Clinicians
From: Dr. Jennifer Layden, IDPH Chief Medical Officer
Date: March 29, 2018
Re: Severe Bleeding among Synthetic Cannabinoids ('K2/Spice') Users

This is a follow-up to two prior IDPH memos on reports of severe bleeding in persons who report using synthetic cannabinoids prior to their illnesses, as reported to IDPH and Illinois Poison Control Center since March 10, 2018. These cases may first present to the ED with bleeding from at least one site, before returning later with an extremely elevated INR and severe bleeding requiring hospital admission. As ED and Urgent Care providers are likely to be the first healthcare providers to encounter these patients, we are providing the following guidance to minimize the chance of patients being released too early and suffering adverse outcomes.

In patients who present with bleeding not from an injury and not otherwise explained, including nosebleeds, bleeding of the gums, bruising, vomiting blood, blood in urine or stool, or excessively heavy menstrual bleeding, ED providers are encouraged to:

1. Ask patients if they have used synthetic cannabinoids within the last 3 months. Terms for these products may include K2, spice, synthetic marijuana, fake weed/legal weed, and genie, among others.
2. If the patient reports synthetic cannabinoid use or you suspect use, check the patient's INR before releasing them.

Please contact the Illinois Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 for questions regarding diagnostic testing and treatment regimens for these patients. Providers are asked to report suspect cases to their local health department (LHD). If the LHD is not available, please notify the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-2016 or 800-782-7860 after hours.