



**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Illinois School Administrators and School Nurses  
**From:** Illinois Department of Public Health  
**Date:** March 27, 2018  
**Re:** Severe Bleeding among Synthetic Cannabinoids ('K2/Spice') Users

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Since March 10, 2018, cases of severe bleeding have been reported to the Illinois Poison Center in persons who report using synthetic cannabinoids, also known as K2, synthetic marijuana, fake weed/legal weed, spice, genie, etc., prior to their illness. All cases have resided in the Chicago area. These products are popular with young people, and it is possible school personnel might be the first to identify a student in distress.

Clinical signs include bruising, nosebleeds, bleeding of the gums, bleeding out of proportion to the level of injury, vomiting blood, blood in urine or stool or excessively heavy menstrual bleeding and back pain.

If any school staff finds a student with significant unexplained bleeding, it is recommended to:

- Get immediate medical care for the student at a hospital.
- If possible, ask if they have used synthetic cannabinoids.
- Follow standard precautions to prevent transmission of bloodborne pathogens. Transmission of synthetic cannabinoids via blood would not occur, but use of standard precautions as per your school's policies and procedures should always be followed to avoid or reduce the risk of exposure to potentially infectious materials.

Hospitals in the state have been notified of the situation. Schools 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.