

Context

Some young people in our area have become unwell after vaping. They thought the vape liquid had THC (a drug found in cannabis), but it actually contained a more **harmful synthetic drug** known as **Spice**.

We want to help you talk to your child about this. Knowing the risks can help keep them safe.

What is Spice?

Spice is a man-made drug, made using chemicals – it is known as a Synthetic Cannabinoid. **Synthetic Cannabinoids** are Class B drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act. It is not real cannabis, but it tries to mimic the desired effects of cannabis. Spice is much stronger than cannabis and produces more frequent negative side effects.

Why is Spice Risky?

- It can make people feel very anxious or worsen mental health problems.
- It can cause bad side effects that may need hospital treatment.
- People who use Spice often can become addicted and feel sick when they stop.

Vaping Products

Some vaping products say they have cannabis or THC in them. These are illegal drugs called Class B drugs.

Because they are illegal:

- No one checks what's inside them.
- They can be very strong and dangerous.
- They might even contain Spice, which is harmful.



These products can be bought online or through encrypted messaging apps like Telegram or Snapchat.

The best way to avoid any risk of harm is to **avoid using illicit vaping products**.

Please note that Consumer CBD (cannabidiol) products derived from cannabis are legal. These are sold for their potential to produce 'wellbeing' benefits, including reducing anxiety and relieving pain.

Overdose

Spice strength can vary a lot, which makes it easy to take too much by accident.

People might not know what drug they've taken. That's why it's best to treat the person's symptoms, not just the drug. If you think someone has taken too much Spice, **call an ambulance immediately.**

General symptoms include:

- Loss of consciousness
- Breathing difficulties
- Seizures
- High temperature (more than 38.5°C)
- Severe chest pains
- Vomiting

Spice overdoses have been known to cause Serotonin Syndrome, where symptoms can also include:

- Twitching or jerking movements
- Fully dilated pupils
- Shivering

Top Tips for Speaking to Young People about Drugs

- It helps to **be as factual as possible**. This makes your message more credible and makes sense to the young person.
- Try to speak with care and kindness. Let the young person know you want them to be safe and well and to have a space for discussion.
- Listen to the young person **so they feel heard**, it can help you both feel calmer and open to talking and be reassuring to you.
- Talk to Frank has some more advice on how to talk to your child www.talktofrank.com

Remember:

- Most young people do not vape.
- Young people in your care may not be interested in cannabis-based vape products.
- Most young people who have tried vaping have only used nicotine-based or flavoured nicotine-free vape products (it is illegal to sell nicotine vaping products to anyone under 18).
- Only a small number of young people who vape use cannabis / THC products

More Information or Help

For non-judgemental help and support for parents, carers or young people, contact STaRS for free and confidential advice, including:

- Advice for parents and carers of young people using drugs and/or alcohol.
- Hidden Harm, support for children affected by other people's drug and/or alcohol use.
- Help for individuals wanting to make changes to their own drug/alcohol use.

For more information on Spice and other substances visit www.talktofrank.com