



LEGAL HIGHS

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Friendly, confidential drugs advice

WHAT ARE LEGAL HIGHS?

Legal highs are substances which mimic the effects of drugs such as cocaine and ecstasy. The main difference is that they're not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act. Despite mimicking the effects of illegal drugs, they're chemically and structurally different enough to avoid being officially classified as illegal substances.

HOW MANY LEGAL HIGHS ARE THERE?

There are already a large number of legal highs on the market. Some are known by their product, or brand names such as Benzo Fury or Ivory Wave. Others are known commonly by their chemical name, e.g. Dimethocaine, 5IAI and MDAT. Certain legal highs are also often referred to by slang names – 'Bubble' being a generic name for any synthetic powder that has a stimulant effect.

THE EFFECTS AND RISKS

One of the biggest problems with legal highs is that little, or no, research has gone in to their effects, especially their long-term effects. However, its reasonable to assume that if they produce similar effects to cocaine or ecstasy, they are also likely to carry similar risks. And some will have new risks that we don't yet know about.

So, just because a drug is legal to possess, it doesn't mean its safe. For example, substances with similar health risks to cocaine and ecstasy can increase the chances of seizures, comas, and in the worst cases, death. These risks are increased if used with alcohol or other drugs.

And some drugs sold as legal highs have actually been found to contain a controlled substance – meaning they aren't legal to possess at all. In fact, several have already been banned, including mephedrone (meow meow) and methoxetamine (mexxy).

FIND OUT MORE

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