

# HUNTINGTON COUNTY

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Huntington County has seen an increase in the use of synthetic drugs. Local law enforcement officials have seen the impact of the devastating effects that synthetic drugs such as K2, Bath Salts and Spice have had upon members of our community. Unfortunately, many of these cases have involved violence. A synthetic drug is viewed by many in the Judicial, Law Enforcement and Health communities as a “gateway” drug to more addicting, dangerous drugs. And while some synthetic drugs are legal under the current state statute, it is vital that as a community we know the impact of these drugs.

Recently, Sheriff Terry Stoffel shared the story of a young adult who purchased a legal synthetic drug called “Black Widow” from a downtown establishment. The impact that drug had on this young person was described as horrific and frightening. Sheriff Stoffel described it as the worst case of a drug reaction that he has seen in many years as a career police officer. The use of the synthetic drug led to a prolonged hospital stay due to compounding medical issues.

You may ask what we can do as a community to combat this threat to public health. Even though users and those who sell these products state that what they are doing nothing wrong. Members of the community need to educate themselves about the dangers of these products. Let me state that this is not just a “youth” problem. The people that are using these products are our sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, parents, and, yes, even grandparents. These products are a danger to all in the community.

Some believe that the products are legal and available locally, so there is limited harm otherwise our legislature would ban these products, or the FDA would outlaw their use. The truth is that the producers of these synthetic drugs know how to label the products so the FDA has no authority to regulate their distribution, and they tweak the chemicals involved to avoid legal accountability. Most of these products are clearly labeled “Not for Human Consumption”, yet the desire for the “high” negates any warning label.

The Huntington County Department of Health is asking all in our community to take a stand and say “NO” to these products and the sale of them in our community. Several area churches are taking steps to openly educate their congregations about these products and what they can do as members of the community to combat this threat. We ask that you take time to educate yourself about the products. Several videos are available on YouTube showing the effects. Also, talk to your family about these products and the dangers they pose. Finally, take lawful action as responsible citizens to help deliver the message to retailers that these products are not wanted or welcomed here.

Respectfully,

*Joe Rakoczy*

Chief Environmental Sanitarian  
Huntington County Department of Health



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.