

Britain bans 'legal high' drugs

23 December 2009

Britain banned several drugs known as "legal highs" Wednesday amid mounting public concern about their health risks.

Substances including chemical solvent GBL, often used by nightclub-goers, and BZP, a stimulant similar to [amphetamine](#), are now illegal, as are herbal smoking products containing man-made chemicals such as "Spice".

Long-standing concerns about the health risks of the drugs, particularly when taken with alcohol, hit the headlines in April after 21-year-old medical student Hester Stewart died after taking GBL.

Her mother, Maryon, campaigned nationally for a ban.

"We are cracking down on so called 'legal highs' which are an emerging threat, particularly to young people," said Home Secretary Alan Johnson.

"That is why we are making a range of these substances illegal from today with ground-breaking legislation which will also ban their related compounds."

The ban has also been extended to 15 [anabolic steroids](#), which are often used by sports people, Johnson said.

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