

Synthetic drug 'Flakka' causes hallucinations, fits of rage

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Photo: U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

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(HealthDay)—A potent new designer drug called "flakka" is making headlines across the United States, driving many users into fits of screaming rage accompanied by vivid hallucinations.

Flakka is a chemical-cousin of the "bath salts" drugs. Both are synthetic versions of naturally occurring amphetamine-like drugs called cathinones, Robert Glatter, M.D., an emergency physician at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, who has written about the new drug, told *HealthDay*. The drug's active ingredient, alpha-PVP, was banned and labeled a Schedule 1 drug by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in early 2014, Glatter said. Schedule 1 drugs are considered the most dangerous, and are believed to have a high risk for abuse or dependence,

according to the DEA. Despite this, flakka's availability has been surging on the streets of Florida.

One of the drug's most severe side effects, a state known as "excited delirium," features violent behavior and hallucinations often accompanied by seriously elevated body temperature, Glatter said. Internally, their muscle tissue begins to break down, which can lead to renal failure. They also face an increased risk of stroke or heart attack, due to their elevated heart rate.

The drug works by blocking the body's ability to reabsorb dopamine and norepinephrine, Glatter said. "Flakka allows these chemicals to remain in the synapses longer, producing an altered state of consciousness," he said.

More information: [More Information](#)

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