

OSAM-O-Gram

Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network

"Bath Salts"

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John R. Kasich, Governor
Orman Hall, Director

Reports of Bath Salts Use Emerging in Several Areas of OSAM Network

Bath salts are synthetic compounds that produce a high similar to a stimulant or hallucinogenic drug and are highly available across all regions. These compounds commonly contain methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDPV), mephedrone or methylone. The generic term, bath salts, is deceiving because these substances are not meant to be used in a bath, but rather used to get high and used by individuals who need to avoid detection on urine drug screens. Readily available from head shops and some convenience marts, bath salts were legally sold during this reporting period under labels such as Cloud 9, Dove, Ivory Wave and Vanilla Sky. These products will be illegal in Ohio as of Oct. 17 due to the passage of House Bill 64, which outlaws the three synthetic stimulants most often found in bath salts. Nationally, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) used its emergency scheduling authority to pass a similar control measure.



Bath salts have been increasingly discussed in OSAM focus groups over the past six months. Nearly every focus group of drug consumers had heard about them. Experienced users described bath salts as synthetic versions of cocaine or Ecstasy. Participants in Athens, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Dayton reported personal experience with bath salts. In Dayton, this drug rapidly gained popularity, and was cited by professionals and participants alike as a growing problem; three of eight participants in one focus group in the region reported being in treatment for bath salts use. In Cincinnati, participants in rural areas cited high bath salts availability in adult video/bookstores. Treatment providers there described learning recently about the abuse of these products from complications seen in users. According to the Central Ohio Poison Center in Columbus, bath salts can cause hallucinations, paranoia, rapid heart rates and seizures (www.daytondailynews.com, June 17, 2011). In Cleveland, participants frequently cited bath salts as up-and-coming in terms of popularity in use.

Throughout the Network, participants and treatment providers reported that the availability and use of bath salts has increased over the past six months, and nearly every crime lab surveyed corroborated this belief and reported that bath salts are now used to cut (adulterate) illegal substances, including powdered cocaine (Akron-Canton and Dayton), crack cocaine (Dayton) and Ecstasy (Youngstown).

The most common route of administration for bath salts is intranasal inhalation (snorting), followed by smoking. Participants described typical users as adolescents and college students (teens to mid-20s). Treatment providers from Columbus and Dayton reported that users are showing up in hospital emergency rooms on a regular basis. Additionally, several media sources have implicated bath salts use as a contributing factor in deaths around Ohio: users overdose or become so paranoid that they commit suicide.



Department of Alcohol &
Drug Addiction Services



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