

# More 'Synthetic Marijuana!' — Spice Ain't Nice



By Josh Bloom — March 22, 2016



Well, it's a day that ends in "Y," so it is no surprise that we

find ourselves reading about yet another episode of the dangerous, misnamed "synthetic marijuana," aka, Spice, K2, bath salts, you name it.

Once again, this latest episode comes to us from Florida, this time in the St. Petersburg area, where 21 people were hospitalized within the past week, suffering from vomiting, unconsciousness and seizures. Although there are no reported deaths at this time, [this has not always been the case](#) [1].

A few facts that you may be unaware of:

- There is no such thing as synthetic marijuana. No one has (or ever will) make a marijuana plant in a chemistry lab. Not even Walter White. We need a more accurate name.
- Rather, the term refers to a group of chemicals, some of which act on the THC (tetrahydrocannabinoid) receptors in the brain, and some that act on multiple receptors. The latter group is very likely responsible for dangerous effects, as well as violent and psychotic behavior such as [face chewing](#) [2].
- There isn't even a chemical called Spice anymore. The drug keeps changing. Analytical techniques that were used to detect the "old" chemicals in Spice may not be equipped to detect new ones — some of which are very possibly not only new illegal drugs but also completely new chemicals that have never been made before. This is the "beauty" of designer drugs — the ability to create novel substances that have never existed before. It is very easy to do this.

A statement from St. Petersburg police spokeswoman Yolanda Fernandez, which appeared in the [Tampa Bay Times](#) [3], is almost funny. Ms. Fernandez said that "these incidents might be related to a 'bad batch' of Spice that has entered into Tampa Bay."

As if there is a *good* batch?



*Spice users near Tampa. Perhaps*

*Not Their Finest Day Ever.* (Source: Clearwater Police Department)

When Clearwater Major Eric Gandy couldn't get a response from a group of users, he said, "The spike that we're seeing and my personnel are dealing with on the road are unprecedented. ... Looked like one of our zombie movies."

I could argue that it is worse. At least *The Walking Dead* can walk.

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**Source URL:** <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/03/22/more-synthetic-marijuana-spice-aint-nice>

**Links**

[1] [http://thefacts.com/news/article\\_7fd365d0-c954-587c-aff1-4215b769e2e2.html](http://thefacts.com/news/article_7fd365d0-c954-587c-aff1-4215b769e2e2.html)

[2] <http://acsh.org/news/2015/09/08/about-face-chewing-synthetic-marijuanas-scourge/>

[3] <http://www.pulseheadlines.com/21-people-hospitalized-consuming-synthetic-marijuana/21732/>