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TO: DeKalb County News Media
FROM: DeKalb County Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Synthetic Cannabinoid Warning

The DeKalb County Health Department is urging people not to use synthetic cannabinoids, often called Spice, K2, or fake weed. Dozens of people in Illinois, including two who died, have experienced severe bleeding, such as coughing up blood, blood in the urine, severe bloody nose, and/or bleeding gums, after using synthetic cannabinoids. Several of these cases have tested positive for brodifacoum, a lethal anticoagulant often used as a rodenticide, or rat poison.

“The number of people experiencing severe bleeding after using synthetic cannabinoids is still increasing,” said the DeKalb County Health Department. “We will continue to work with state and federal public health officials to try to identify common products and where it’s coming from. We strongly urge everyone not to use synthetic cannabinoids.”

Since March 7, 2018, the IDPH has received reports of 95 cases, including two deaths, linked to an outbreak. There are currently no confirmed cases in DeKalb County.

Synthetic cannabinoids are human-made, mind-altering chemicals that are sprayed on to dried plant material. They can be smoked or sold as liquids to be vaporized in e-cigarettes and other devices. These chemicals are called cannabinoids because they are similar to chemicals found in the marijuana plant. The health effects from using synthetic cannabinoids can be unpredictable, harmful, and deadly.

Public health officials continue to investigate to try to identify any common brand and determine where they were obtained. Synthetic cannabinoids are found across Illinois and the U.S. in convenience stores, gas stations, drug paraphernalia shops, novelty stores, and online.

Anyone who has a reaction to synthetic cannabinoids, such as severe bleeding, should call 911 or have someone take them to the emergency department immediately.

The number of cases and counties of residence are posted on the [IDPH website](#) at 1:30 p.m. each weekday.

For information about the DeKalb County Health Department Services, visit health.dekalbcounty.org or follow us on social media.

