

# WHAT IS "FLAKKA"?

## The New Designer Drug Hitting the U.S.

There is growing alarm in Florida, Ohio, Texas and elsewhere around the nation about a new drug called "flakka". It is causing users to exhibit paranoid, delusional and often violent behavior. A number of bizarre street crimes have been linked to this new designer drug, which can give users superhuman strength.



What is "flakka" and how is it used? "Flakka" is in the same class of chemical found in bath salts. It contains a compound known as alpha-PVP, similar in structure to MDPV. It is a synthetic drug that is structurally related to cathinone. The drug can be snorted, smoked, injected or even ingested. The United States Drug Enforcement Administration has classified alpha-PVP as a Schedule I drug since 2014.

"Flakka" comes in a crystalline rock form and it is often sold online and repackaged in capsules or made available for vaping in e-cigarettes. Because of this, it can be easily concealed and used in public without raising suspicion of law enforcement or friends and family.

What are its effects? Alpha-PVP is a central nervous system stimulant. This drug is highly addictive, both physically and psychologically. Its effects can be as potent as crystal meth, bath salts or cocaine. Its use increases brain levels of dopamine, which results in alert and euphoric feelings often coupled with dangerous side effects of aggression and excited delirium. Acute psychotic reactions have been documented, and users have been known to rip off their clothes and exhibit adrenaline-like strength. Physiological effects may include hypertension, elevated heart rate and a hypermetabolic state that may lead to hyperthermia.

"Flakka's" effects can last as few as 3-4 hours or possibly linger for several days. It is often taken while the user is already high on "flakka"—a practice known as snacking—or cut with other drugs such as heroin, cocaine or marijuana, often leading to additional serious health problems.

**Street names:** "Flakka" is a part of the new trend in the drug supply industry of creating brand names to build popularity, much like the drug K2, also known as spice. Flakka is also popular elsewhere in the nation, especially Tennessee and Pennsylvania, often sold under the street name of "gravel" because it looks like grainy pebbles or salt.

### QUICK FACTS

*"Flakka" is made from the chemical alpha-PVP, a synthetic version of the stimulant cathinone. "Flakka" is in the same class of chemicals used to make bath salts.*

### SIDE EFFECTS

- Anxiety and paranoia
- Extreme aggression
- Hallucinations
- Rapid heart rate
- Rapid body heat elevation to 105-106°
- Death

*According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, "flakka" cases are significantly increasing, from zero cases in 2010 to 85 cases in 2010, and more than 670 cases in 2014.*

### DETECTION

*The chemical compound of "flakka", also known as Gravel, is alpha-PVP, which can be detected in urine with specialized lab testing. The urine specimen must be wrapped in foil due to light sensitivity.*

Call Norchem today, at 855-625-3778, to start testing for this dangerous drug.