



For Immediate Release:

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Health Officer Issues Warning Against a Synthetic Drug called “Bath Salts”

Drug can lead to kidney failure, seizures, and other potentially deadly effects

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles County Health Officer is issuing a warning against the use of “bath salts,” a synthetic drug that can cause severe side effects such as kidney and liver failure, seizures, increased suicide risk, and even death. The drug has been gaining popularity in recent years, leading to increased reports of violence and other harm.

“Bath salts are particularly dangerous in that not much is known about what goes into the drug and even less is known about what people are capable of while on this drug. We do know that there are harmful risks to users, and there is an increased potential for others to be harmed if someone near them is high on this drug,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. “All illicit drug use should be avoided.”

Other side effects of “bath salts” use include sweating, chest pain, rapid heart rate, hallucinations, violent behavior, and mental illness. Symptoms of “bath salts” abuse can include lack of appetite, decreased need for sleep, self-mutilation, and severe paranoia.

“Bath salts” is not the same product as the cosmetic, bath-related product sold online, or in bath, beauty, or drug stores, and should not be confused. The bath-related product is safe to use as directed on packaging, however it is not safe to consume any product labeled as “bath salts.”

The drug has several street names in addition to “bath salts,” including White Lightning, White Rush, and Hurricane Charlie, among other names. It is often sold in tobacco or smoke shops, may be packaged in small plastic bags, canisters, or jars, and may be labeled as “plant food” or “pond water cleaner.” The drug should not be consumed, used as plant food, or used to clean pond water.

For more information about “bath salts”, please visit the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration fact sheet at http://www.justice.gov/dea/druginfo/drug_data_sheets/Bath_Salts.pdf or the Partnership for a Drug Free America website at <http://www.drugfree.org/drug-guide/bath-salts>.

For information on drug abuse prevention and treatment, visit the Public Health Substance Abuse Prevention and Control page at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc> or call its Community Assessment Services Centers at (800) 564-6600. Additionally, the Poison Help Hotline offers free, confidential services 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (800) 222-1222.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community



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partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: LAPublicHealth.

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