

Talking to people about synthetics

Give advice that is relevant to the person you are speaking to. You don't need to have this conversation with everyone. But if someone is around people using synthetics or already using them, they need information about safer use and how to access help. **Be honest and open to listening when you speak with them.**

To start talking about synthetics with a person you can:



HAVE A CONVERSATION

Watch the **Did You Know?** [synthetics video](#) together and talk about what comes up. You can use the [conversation planner](#) to get your thoughts together

What to say:

- Not using these substances is the safest option.
- These new products are significantly more toxic than synthetics that were previously available.

AND THEN

If they are using, or around other people using



GIVE APPROPRIATE INFORMATION

If someone says their friends or others in their life are using synthetics, it is a good idea to offer some more detailed advice. The Synthetic Psychoactive Substances [brief advice card](#) is good to refer to and pass on.

What to say:

- With each purchase, start slowly and only use a small amount. Wait to feel the full effects.
- Some synthetics might look like cannabis. But if it doesn't smell like cannabis, it isn't and should be avoided.
- Avoid mixing with alcohol, medication or other drugs. This can greatly increase the strain on the body and the risk of an overdose.
- If you begin to feel unwell or overwhelmed stop immediately and move to a quiet space with fresh air. If you can, ask someone to sit with you.
- Call 111 if you/someone else is having difficulty breathing, extreme agitation, paranoia, losing consciousness, seizures or frothing at the mouth.
- Don't use a plastic bottle or can. Use a pipe or roll into papers instead.

Some people use synthetics as an escape from trauma, poverty or emotional distress, and need extra support.



AND THEN

If other support could help



CONNECT THEM WITH THE RIGHT SERVICES

The Alcohol Drug Helpline can let you know what support is available (0800 787 797) or you can look at [Healthpoint.co.nz](#) for services in your area.

What to say:

- Most people experience a comedown after using which can last a few days.
- Not using at all is safest. But if you aren't there yet, try using a smaller amount, less frequently. The unpleasant comedown can start quickly, so you might need support to avoid using again straight away.
- You should seek professional support if you are finding it hard to stop, having strong cravings, experiencing negative mental health or are using more to get the same effect. They can help you make a plan and provide mental health support.