



Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse  
Centre canadien de lutte contre l'alcoolisme et les toxicomanies

*Prepared by CCSA in partnership with the  
Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (CCENDU)*

# CCENDU Drug Alert

## “Bath Salts”

### Summary Information

- “Bath salts” are not salts that go in your bath, but is rather the street name for a number of synthetic amphetamine-type stimulants that look like salts (i.e., they are a white powder).
- The general public, especially youth, should be aware that although bath salts are often identified as “legal highs” or “not illegal” this **does not** make them safe.
- People taking bath salts report hallucinations, paranoia, chest pain, blurry vision and increased body temperature, and can be agitated and combative.
- Bath salts are sold by dealers via the Internet or in “head-shops.”
- As of May 2012 the use of bath salts in Canada appears to be mainly limited to the Maritime provinces.

### What are “bath salts”?

Bath salts is a name used for a class of products containing synthetic stimulants sold by dealers via the Internet or in drug paraphernalia shops (“head-shops”). Bath salts are frequently labelled “not for human consumption,” presumably in an attempt to circumvent drug laws in the jurisdictions in which these products are purchased.

These products are in no way related to the salts that are sold to put in the bath (e.g., Epsom salts or other perfumed skin softening agents). Rather, they contain amphetamine-type stimulants, such as methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV), methylone or mephedrone. These substances are part of the group of drugs known as synthetic cathinones. Synthetic cathinones are prepared in illicit laboratories and are chemically similar to naturally occurring cathinones found in the Khat plant, a shrub native to the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

Individuals under the influence of these substances report hallucinations, paranoia, chest pain and blurry vision, and appear agitated and combative. Because of this agitation, there have been some reports from the United States that these individuals can pose a danger to themselves and others.

### Street names

Ivory Wave, Vanilla Sky, Pure Ivory, Cloud Nine, Whack, Bolivian Bath, Purple Wave, Charge+, Ocean Burst, Ecstasy, Gloom, Purple Rain, Salt, Fly, Hurricane Charley, Crash, White, Rush, Plant Food, Bubbles, Meow Meow, Explosion, Monkey Dust, Monkey Mess, Monkey Mash, Pixie Dust, Rave On.

# CCENDU DRUG ALERT

## Reports from CCENDU

Reports from the Maritime provinces indicate that authorities there are witnessing an increased presence of bath salts. The state of Maine recently experienced an increased prevalence of this synthetic drug (see the article in the [Bangor Daily News](#)), which may be related to the increased presence in the Maritime provinces.








The following information was compiled in response to a request for information sent out to CCENDU on May 3, 2012. Information was received between May 3 and May 22, 2012. A summary of the findings is presented in Table 1.

### *Level of Concern*

Level of Concern is assessed by the individual compiling the information received by the network. There are currently no established definitions used to determine level of concern.

**Table 1. Level of concern regarding the use of bath salts among Canadian municipalities (ordered from west to east) based on local reports between May 3 and May 22, 2012.**

Low      High

Level of Concern	City	Notes
	Vancouver	No reports
	Edmonton	No reports
	Prince Albert	Two cases of self-disclosed use of bath salts in the fall of 2011. Detox and outpatient facilities report people talking about bath salts, but no confirmed use.
	Winnipeg	Report of a few individuals claiming to have used bath salts irregularly when they were unable to obtain other drugs; however, nothing has been confirmed.
	Toronto	<p>There is little to report in Toronto specific to MDPV. It is one of many “research chemicals” used among youth in Toronto’s club and party scene. Use of these drugs is still limited, although growing. Data about local use of research chemicals are non-existent and reports are anecdotal. The most complete information comes from the TRIP Project, a harm reduction program working with youth in the club and party scene. TRIP has begun using test kits to see what pills actually contain. A TRIP staff member, who is also a member of Toronto’s Research Group on Drug Use, noted that “the last pressed E pill tested by a volunteer came out positive for cathinones and piperazines.” For more information, see TRIP’s website: <a href="http://www.tripproject.ca/trip/?q=node/2005">http://www.tripproject.ca/trip/?q=node/2005</a>.</p> <p>At the provincial level, the 2011 Ontario student survey (OSDUHS) assessed the reported use of mephedrone or bath salts among students in grades 7 to 12. However, the estimates were suppressed because they were too low to estimate with the sample of 9,000. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has concluded that there is no evidence that mephedrone had measurably diffused to the student population.</p>
	Ottawa	Neither treatment providers nor the police report encountering “bath salts.” However, there is an expectation among some that areas of the Ottawa Valley could be seeing bath salts in the near future. This expectation is due to a seizure of bath salts by the Ontario Provincial Police in the neighbouring community of Arnprior.
	Montreal	No reports

# CCENDU DRUG ALERT



New  
Glasgow, NS

In April New Glasgow police reported a few cases of individuals acting erratically and posing a danger to themselves as a result of using bath salts. Local health authorities have reported at least fourteen (14) incidents related to bath salts in the past few months. These include cases reported by hospital emergency departments in New Glasgow and Truro, where individuals ingesting bath salts required emergency care. These incidences also include calls and admissions to local withdrawal management centres. Local authorities have found bath salts mixed with other drugs such as cannabis, so there is great concern that users may be unaware they are ingesting the substance. The Pictou County Health Authority has been meeting with local law enforcement to discuss the emergence of bath salts and discuss demand reduction and supply reduction strategies.

## Legal Status in Canada

Mephedrone and methyldone are regulated as controlled substances in Canada because they are deemed to be similar to amphetamine, which is listed as Item I in Schedule III of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA). MDPV is not however considered to be a controlled substance and so is not currently subject to the controls set out in the CDSA or its regulations.

**Update: June 5, 2012**

The Government of Canada plans to make MDPV illegal this fall by placing it on Schedule I of the CDSA, in the same category as heroin and cocaine. The new rules mean activities such as possession, trafficking, possession for the purpose of trafficking, importation, exportation and production will be illegal unless authorized by regulation.

## Resources

A comprehensive source of information on bath salts is provided in a webinar produced by the Northern New England Poison Center in August 2011. This webinar, which provides information for both prevention and healthcare professionals, is available at: <http://www.nnepc.org/poison-prevention-education/lectures/bath-salt-webinar>.

CCENDU will continue to monitor the use of bath salts across Canada, as well as internationally. If you have any questions, comments, information to contribute or corrections to the information contained in this alert, please contact [CCENDU@ccsa.ca](mailto:CCENDU@ccsa.ca).

---

The Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (CCENDU) is a nation-wide network of community level partners who share information about local trends and emerging issues in substance use and exchange knowledge and tools to support more effective data collection.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) provides national leadership, develops sustainable partnerships and advances solutions to ensure that all people in Canada live in a healthy society free of alcohol- and other drug-related harm.

**Disclaimer:** Though every effort has been made to identify and compile the best and most reliable information available on the topic, the nature of the alert is such that CCSA cannot confirm the validity of all information included or that acquired from links provided. While we have done our utmost to provide correct information, CCSA makes no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy or reliability with respect to the information included in this alert or the information included in the links provided.

© Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse 2012