



Nottingham
Recovery
Network

Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists



Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists

Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonist's (SCRA) are a range of chemicals that were made to replicate cannabis. Known as Mamba in some places, such as Nottingham, and as Spice in others.

When we first saw Mamba in Nottingham it was as a liquid used in vapes. We know that recently the liquid SCRA is often in the THC and Hemp oils sold in shops and online, causing unexpected reactions for people taking them.

Sales of SCRA really took off when it started being sold as legal cannabis. It was mixed with a herb substance to look like cannabis, it was cheaper, easily accessible from shops and online, and legal. Making it look like cannabis added another problem into the mix. If you pour the Mamba liquid onto the herbs, it will run off it. To get it to stick together they add an acetone chemical in with it. The most common acetone used is nail varnish remover.

When it was sold in the shops the manufacturers kept the acetone to a minimum the SCRA came in fruity flavours, like the vapes. This masked the smell of the acetone. In recent years, since it stopped being sold in shops, the acetone levels have increased. This is what gives the Mamba its very distinctive strong smell.

When SCRA was sold in the shops some of its effects were more similar to cannabis, nowadays it is a lot stronger and nothing like cannabis. This has led to a big change in the people who use it. It is rarely used within the cannabis market now but is used mainly by the Heroin and Crack users, and prevalent in the homeless community.

There are hundreds of different SCRA chemical formulas available. Some behave very differently to others, this adds to the unpredictability of the product. People don't know which SCRA is present, what acetone is used, or what levels of each one are in the batch. It is impossible to know exactly what effect it will have.

There is a lot of inconsistency to Mamba and the effects it gives. There will be different batches coming out regularly, often on a daily basis.

It is difficult to build up a consistent picture of the potency and side effects, and to know what is going around within the community. The Mamba user is often on prescribed medication too, often topped up with prescription medications bought on the street. Just to add another element of unpredictability to the situation.

Mamba is very cheap and easy to make, giving it a very low street price compared to other drugs. Current prices vary a bit but are usually £5 for 1g, and £40 to £60 for an ounce (28g). It has not been unusual to get an ounce for £25 at times.

The body rapidly builds up tolerance to SCRA use, people get dependent to it in a very short space of time. Usage increases mainly to stop the physical harms that withdrawal brings. Mamba is short lasting, about 20-30 mins, leaving the user in pain and discomfort when they start to come down. Sickness and diarrhoea, with intense chest and stomach pains are common. Many Mamba users chain smoke it to stop the comedown happening. It is not unusual for someone to be smoking an ounce a day. People can become aggressive and violent when coming down or running low of Mamba. Mental health is effected, with psychosis like effects, paranoia, anxiety, depression, severe weight loss and other strange, erratic behaviours.

A Mamba user can be difficult to engage with as they are usually under the influence of SCRA or suffering with the come down. All staff who come into contact with Mamba users should be aware of the effects and what harm reduction information to pass on.

Mamba users should be encouraged to come to the Nottingham Recovery Network at the Nottingham Wellbeing Hub. There they will get an assessment and the staff will decide on the best treatment plan for them. It could be psychosocial talking therapies, motivating change, and community or inpatient detox. The first step is always getting the person linked into the service.



Mamba Harm Reduction Advice

The only way to avoid any harm is not to use it, but if you are going to then please read this and seek help as soon as you start having any problems.

When smoking mamba, take small drags as the acetone burns at a high temperature and can burn your mouth and throat.

Always give your bag of mamba a good shake before using, to break up any concentrated 'clumps' of acetone in the product.

Be careful if smoking it after eating. If the mamba knocks you out and you vomit, the food could get stuck in your throat and cause choking. If you see someone collapsed always put them on their side, in the recovery position.

When getting night sweats, particularly if sleeping rough, always make sure you stay wrapped up. If you take your covers off your sweat can get cold, leading to illness, particularly pneumonia.

If approaching someone under the influence of mamba, always do so in a calm and reassuring way. Do not startle them. If they are wandering around then try and get them to sit down.

When you do eat, try and eat healthy food. Use multi-vitamin tablets if possible when not eating

Eating oranges, drinking fresh orange juice or sugary drinks can bring people round if they are not too far out of it.

Don't self-medicate with other drugs. Come to Nottingham Recovery Network for help and advice.

Usually people under the influence do not need emergency treatment, but in all cases, if you are in any doubt, call an ambulance.

For more information seek specialist advice.

www.nottinghamrecoverynetwork.com

info@nottinghamrecoverynetwork.com

0800 066 5362 or 0115 850 4135



**Nottingham
Recovery
Network**