**Bath salts** [1]

bath salts

The term “bath salts” refers to an emerging family of drugs containing one or more synthetic chemicals related to cathinone, an amphetamine-like stimulant found naturally in the Khat plant.

Synthetic cathinones are closely related to the phenethylamine family and typically have an amphetamine-type analogue. Examples of synthetic cathinones in Australia include Mephedrone (‘Meow Meow’, ‘M-CAT’); Methylone; MDPV (‘Ivory wave’); alpha-PVP (‘flakka”).

Synthetic cathinones first appeared in drug markets in the mid-2000s, with methylone the first to be reported.

The name ‘bath salts’ derives from the appearance of the drug. The white powder, granules, or crystals often resemble true bath salts such as Epsom salts, but are very different chemically and should not be confused.

Research suggests that some of the health risks associated with the use of synthetic cathinones may include:

- anxiety
- agitation
- chest pain
- abnormal sensation, typically tingling or prickling of the skin (paraesthesia)
- heart palpitations
- seizures
- abnormally fast heartbeat (tachycardia)
- high blood pressure (hypertension)
- dependence.

For more information about synthetic drugs, see [New and emerging psychoactive substances](#). [2]
How common is the use of bath salts?

The 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey found that 0.4% of Australians aged 14 and over have ever tried any type of emerging psychoactive substances (EPS), which includes 'bath salts', while 0.4% used EPS in the year preceding the survey. The 2013 Survey was the first to collect data on use of emerging psychoactive substances (EPS). EPS is a term used to describe drugs that are relatively new to the recreational drug market and have mind-altering effects similar to conventional illicit drugs (including those known as meow meow, kronic and BZP) (NDARC 2013). There are no specific results available for 'bath salts' in the survey.

Further reading

- [Bath salts](https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/bath-salts) - Drug Enforcement Agency (USA)
- [Synthetic cathinones (bath salts)](http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/synthetic-cathinones-bath-salts) - National Institute on Drug Abuse (USA)
- [Synthetic drugs: the facts](https://yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au/publicationdocuments/Synthetic%20Drug%20the%20facts%20A5%20booklet%20updated%202018.pdf) - NSW Health

Source URL: https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/drug-info/drugs/z-drugs/bath-salts

Links