LEGAL HIGHS......what you need to know:

- Legal highs are substances used like illegal drugs such as cocaine or cannabis, but they are not covered by current misuse of drug laws, and so are legal to possess or to use.
- Although these drugs are marketed as legal substances, this doesn’t mean that they are safe or approved for people to use. It just means that they’ve not been declared illegal to use and possess. They are still normally considered illegal to sell under medicines legislation.

Risks:

- Legal highs can carry serious health risks. The chemicals they contain have in most cases never been used in drugs for human consumption before, so haven’t been tested to show that they are safe. Users can never be certain what they are taking and what the effects might be.
- Legal highs can bring about reduced inhibitions, drowsiness, excited or paranoid states, coma, seizures and death.
- There is the possibility of long term health risks but due to the recent wave of legal highs, these are not currently known.

How many legal highs are there?

- There are already a large number of legal highs on the market. Some are known by their product, or brand names such as Benzo Fury, Ivory Wave or Spice. Others are known commonly by their chemical name, e.g. Dimethocaine, 5IAI and MDAT.
- Certain legal highs are also often referred to by slang names such as ‘bubble’ a generic name for any synthetic powder that has a stimulant effect.

Mephedrone:

- This is a stimulant, with effects similar to amphetamines (speed) and ecstasy (MDMA). It comes as a white or off-white powder either loose in bags or sometimes in capsules.
- Mephedrone is now an illegal drug but it used to be sold over the internet and often described as a plant food, research chemical or bath salts - “not for human consumption”.

When to seek medical help?

- Most problems with short-term use of legal highs will settle after people stop taking them. However, the negative effects of some legal highs can take a few days to wear off completely, just like the comedown from stimulants such as cocaine and amphetamines.
- If you think you someone is having a serious negative reaction soon after taking a legal high or they are experiencing problems that do not settle they should seek medical help straight away by going to A+E.