Unknown risks
Some types of substance can be more potent and volatile than others and have different effects on people who take them. Many haven’t had any safety testing, so it’s impossible to know what effect they’ll have.

The effects
Some make you feel up, some make you sleepy and woozy and others make you feel trippy. After use, some people will have what’s called a comedown where they can feel sick, anxious, low, bad tempered and paranoid.

Know the law
The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 made it an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, import or export (including over the internet) any psychoactive substance. Possession is not an offence, except in a custodial institution (such as prison). Supplying someone else, including your friends, could result in up to 7 years in prison and/or a fine. Certain products such as nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, food and medicinal products are exempt.

Stronger than you think
Synthetic cannabinoids are usually smoking mixtures which are often sold in bright packets. They look like dried herbs or plant cuttings, which are sprayed with potent chemicals. The effects differ from cannabis, they are stronger and more unpredictable. Many people have reported unpleasant physical and mental side effects including paranoia and panic attacks.

Dangers of overheating
Stimulant NPS can cause overheating and dehydration. Drinking alcohol, being in a hot club, dancing without taking breaks and not drinking enough water makes this worse.

Know the score
About new psychoactive substances (NPS) or ‘legal highs’

Ask for help if you need to
Never be scared to ask for support or help. If anyone starts to feel unwell, it’s always best to call an ambulance immediately. Leaving it can be fatal.
For non-emergencies call 101.
For medical emergencies contact 999.
For non-urgent medical advice contact your GP or NHS 24 on 111.

Where to get information, advice and support
For support in your area, search on scottishdrugservices.com
For free, confidential advice about drugs call the Know The Score helpline on 0800 587 587 9 (lines open 8am-11pm, 7 days a week).