

Arizona Daily Sun

Public Health and You: Powdered alcohol: What you should know

May 18, 2015 3:32 pm

- [CANDICE KOENKER Special to the Daily Sun](#)

Palcohol is a powder that creates an alcoholic drink when mixed with water or other liquid. Recently the United States Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau approved the sale of powdered alcohol, and due to Governor Ducey's veto of House Bill 2178, which would have prohibited the sales of powdered alcohol, this product could be available for sale in Arizona as soon as this summer.

Although the makers of Palcohol maintain that its convenience outweighs any possible negative consequences, both lawmakers and health experts have expressed apprehension about its upcoming availability.

Concerns about Palcohol mainly involve the likely misuse, overuse, and increased accessibility to youth. One of the most often cited concerns is that the powdered alcohol will be snorted instead of used as it directed, which is to be ingested orally. Interestingly, Palcohol in their original advertisements, which have since been discontinued, suggested that Palcohol could be combined "with foods after they are cooked; some suggestions included: vodka on eggs and rum on a sandwich. The company even explained that Palcohol could be snorted to get drunk "almost instantly."

Dr. Nial Wheate, senior lecturer in Pharmaceutical Chemistry at University of Sydney, points out that due to lack of research, it is unknown what effects using alcohol in this manner would have.

There is additional concern about potency of Palcohol. Although the makers argue "Palcohol is not some super-concentrated version of alcohol; it's simply one shot of alcohol in powdered form," there is the possibility of adding the powder to an already alcoholic drink or adding three packages of powder to the water of one. This could potentially lead to an extremely potent alcohol content in a small amount of liquid.

Finally, in a statement released by the Center for Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Director David Jernigan expressed worries about the impact these types of products will have on youth. He states that allowing powdered alcohol onto the market will have grave consequences for our nation's young people and that efforts should be focused on making alcoholic products less, not more, available to our nation's youth.

Unfortunately, the product is so new that virtually no research has been conducted on the health effects, or the concerns addressed above.

Many states are taking notice of the new product. Before the 2015 legislative session, only two states had existing statutes affecting powdered alcohol. However, as of April 2015, 77 bills in 39 states (and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) have been introduced and sale of the product is now banned in seven states.

With the release of Palcohol right around the corner, the Coconino County Public Health Services District is asking our community, parents and teachers to be vigilant and to educate others, especially youth, about the possible dangers of this product.

To learn more about Palcohol and its potential dangers, visit <http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/addiction/news/20150313/powdered-alcohol-faq>.

For news about current legislation related to powdered alcohol, visit the National Council of State Legislatures at <http://www.ncsl.org/research/financial-services-and-commerce/powdered-alcohol-2015-legislation.aspx>

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