Narcotic nutmeg [1]

Alice,

My friends have told me that the spice nutmeg can be used to get a high, and a pretty intense one. But having to eat about a cup of it to get the high.

Is this true? What effects would this have on your body?

? Potential Spice Girl

Answer

Dear Potential Spice Girl,

It may sound a little nutty, but your friends are partially correct. Nutmeg, a spice commonly used to flavor lattes, sweets, and other foods, has also been reported to produce a high that is similar to the one obtained with marijuana. A little can go a long way: it usually takes as little as two teaspoons to two tablespoons to produce this high, which lasts a short time but lacks the "instant gratification" feeling of marijuana. Side effects of nutmeg overdosing may include nausea, vomiting, insomnia, dry mouth, constipation, heart palpitations, hallucinations, and abdominal spasms. Fever, shock, a feeling of impending doom, psychotic episodes, and death have also been known to occur. These symptoms tend to appear anywhere from half an hour to three hours after ingestion and can last over the next 24 to 48 hours.

Keep in mind that using recreational substances, especially those that aren't intended to serve this role, may have widely varying effects from one person to the next. This means that nutmeg may produce a huge high with no side effects in your best friend while it gives you no high with major side effects. Given that the side effects described above can be so damaging to your health, you might want to consider if the temporary high from nutmeg is worth the discomfort that may still be present after your buzz dies down. While there are a few reports of nutmeg use to get "high" going back a hundred years (or more), there is little research in this area, meaning that there might be many other serious long-term health risks that no one knows about yet. With chances like that, nutmeg is probably not the best way to spice up your social life. For suggestions on how to get a natural high without the side effects, check out Natural highs [2] in the Alcohol & Other Drugs [3] archive.

Alice!

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