

# On sale openly and legally - the drugs as dangerous as Ecstasy and cocaine

By Kate Chambre

**MINDBENDING** drugs legally sold in Ireland are as lethal as cocaine, Ecstasy and other class A substances, experts warned last night.

Anti-drugs campaigners hit out after it emerged that pills containing the stimulant BZP, which is described by the U.S. Department of Justice as being 20 times more potent than amphetamines or 'speed', are openly available.

Packaged in pairs under the names 'Jax Extra Strength', 'Pep' and 'Smiley's', the tablets are on sale to anyone aged 18 or over at the Dublin Head Store in Temple Bar.

Clinical trials have shown that BZP - the common name for the synthetic drug N-benzylpiperazine - can cause convulsions in otherwise healthy adults.

Although it was originally developed to help wean drug users off amphetamines, it has now become popular due to the similarity of its effects with those of ecstasy.

The 'Jax' brand is marketed as being a 'new legal high' that is 'five times stronger than any other dance pills', while 'Smiley's' are described as having 'e-sensory and speed-like qualities'. Yesterday, the Dublin Head Store was selling two of each brand for €36.

Last night, the international president of Europe Against Drugs, Dublin-based Grainne Kenny, called for an immediate ban on BZP and said: 'The fact that these drugs are being sold legally over the counter is a huge problem - the law has to be changed.'

'Enticing young people to use drugs which are as bad as Ecstasy, cocaine and other Class A drugs is absolutely appalling.'

'In every country, it is important that ministers look at our laws and change them before it's too late.'

'These drugs are mimicking ecstasy and speed and have already been the cause of deaths.'

Fine Gael health spokesman Dr

## 'These drugs have caused deaths'

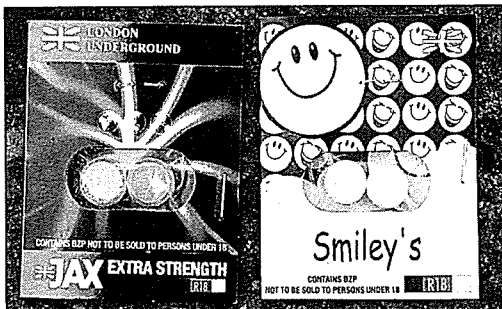
Liam Twomey also called on the Government to ban BZP.

He said: 'Given the nature of this drug and its status in other countries, I think the Health Minister should look at this matter immediately and reclassify it.'

A spokesman for the Department of Health insisted the status of BZP remained under review, saying: 'BZP is not a scheduled substance under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1997.'

'The legality of all substances is kept under review, in particular if there is evidence that the drug is being misused or is causing harm to people.'

BZP is outlawed in several countries, including Canada and in every Australian state except



Legal high: These drugs contain BZP which can cause convulsions

Victoria - which is set to ban it next month. The Temple Bar shop also sold 'magic mushrooms' until they were made illegal by Health Minister Mary Harney earlier this year.

The Tánaiste's move followed the death of Colm Hodgkinson, 33, who plunged off an apartment block balcony in Dún Laoghaire last Halloween after taking the hallucinogenic fungus.

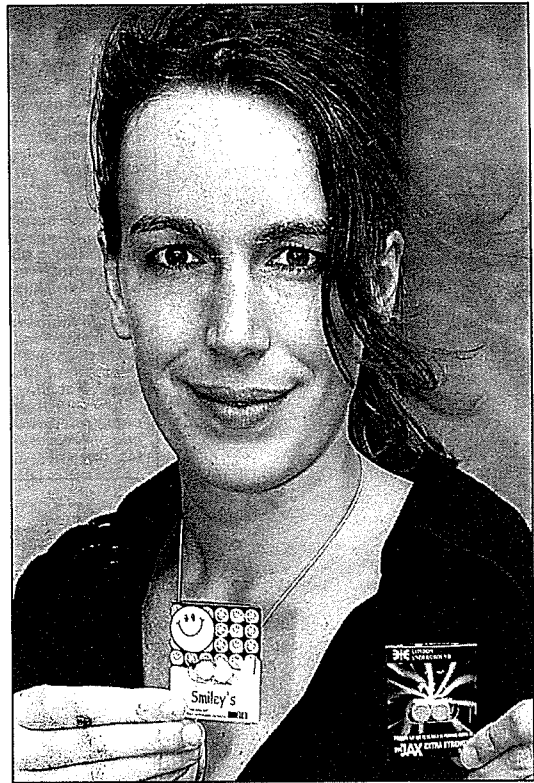
Last night, Miss Kenny said that once 'magic mushrooms' were made illegal, it was inevitable that manufacturers would 'get around the law' and come up with 'other brands of

drugs, which were equally as bad.' When buying both 'Jax Extra Strength' and 'Smiley's' over the counter yesterday, the shop assistant offered no word of warning of their strength to the Mail's reporter.

However, one of the drugs did come with a printed caution.

'Jax are aimed at the experienced chubber and were originally designed as a replacement to assist people coming off E. Jax are strong, very strong.'

'If you weigh less than 70kg, it is advised that you only take half a pill.'



Undercover: Reporter Kate Chambre with samples of the drugs

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## With this pre-nup I wed Baywatch star, claims Hasselhoff's ex-wife

**EX-BAYWATCH** star David Hasselhoff was so desperate to protect his bulging bank account he got his wife to sign a pre-nuptial agreement 30 minutes before their marriage.

Pamela Bach, now 42, was in her wedding dress waiting to walk down the aisle when her husband-to-be thrust the piece of paper into her hands.

Thinking it was her marriage license, the actress failed to read the small print and added her signature before entering the church and saying 'I do'.

These astonishing events were revealed in the latest court hearing for the bitter divorce battle between Hasselhoff and Bach.

### Mail Foreign Service

Hasselhoff, 54, who rose to fame as lifeguard Mitch Buchannon in the TV series Baywatch, filed for divorce in January this year following a 16-year-marriage.

After the actor walked out, his relationship descended into a seething feud, with Bach demanding a restraining order on her estranged husband.

While the actress claimed Hasselhoff once broke her nose, he stated the only man who ever did that was her plastic surgeon.

The couple then fought over custody of their two daughters - 16-year-old Taylor-Ann and 13-year-old Hayley - until a court

granted them joint custody of the girls.

Now new court papers show Bach is disputing the validity of the pre-nup. The actress claims Hasselhoff first mentioned a pre-nup less than a month before their December 9 wedding date in 1989.

'Because I had never heard the term "prenuptial agreement" prior to that time, I had no concept of the legal impact associated with the document,' she said in a written statement.

Just two weeks ago lawyers for the couple argued who should look after their pets before eventually ruling that around £1,200 worth of veterinary bills run up this month should be paid from the joint account.

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