



# Public Health Delta & Menominee Counties



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DATE: March 25, 2011  
TO: Delta County News Media  
FROM: Barbara Chenier  
Health Officer/ Administrator  
SUBJECT: Press Release

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## Poisonous “Bath Salts” Cases on Rise in Delta County

Under the authority of Michigan’s Public Health Code, Public Health, Delta & Menominee Counties has issued an emergency order to prevent imminent danger to the health and lives of individuals in our community. This emergency order concerns the sale of toxic products marketed as “bath salts.”

These so-called “bath salts” are being sold across the country as packets of white powder at head shops, convenience stores and on the street. They contain a number of synthetic chemicals which are strong stimulants that can cause increased heart rate, chest pains, dizziness, delusions, panic attacks, nose bleeds and nausea. Individuals ingesting these chemicals can become extremely paranoid and severe cases have required long-term psychiatric care. According to Dr. Greg Holtzman, Chief Medical Executive of the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), use of these stimulants affects neurotransmitters in the brain which can result in violent behavior and death. These products are NOT the commercially manufactured bath salts that people purchase to use in the bath tub.

Serious health effects caused by the use of these “bath salts” were first observed in the Upper Peninsula by the Emergency Department of Marquette General Hospital in early February. The unprecedented number of individuals exhibiting serious symptoms led the Marquette County Health Department to issue an emergency order removing these “bath salt” products from local store shelves. The following week, similar action was taken by the Western Upper Peninsula Health Department in Houghton after similar cases were seen by Portage Health Services in their Emergency Department. A number of these individuals required psychiatric inpatient care or intensive hospital care. One possible overdose death has been attributed to “bath salts” use.

Recently, a rash of similar cases has been seen by Delta County law enforcement and OSF St. Francis Hospital Emergency Department. Law enforcement determined that a “bath salts” product called “White Rush” was being sold locally, resulting in serious medical and psychiatric effects on users. Therefore, Public Health, Delta & Menominee Counties, with support from area medical personnel, law enforcement and the Delta County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office,

has issued an Emergency Order to remove from sale any and all products known as “White Rush” or similar “bath salts.” According to Barb Chenier, Health Officer/ Administrator for Public Health, Delta & Menominee Counties, the Emergency Order issued locally was necessary to prevent any further harm to users or others in the community.

Legislation has been introduced in the Michigan State Senate to declare these “bath salts” products as controlled substances, which would make their sale or use illegal. The MDCH is working closely with the Michigan Poison Control Center to monitor the number of patients treated for use of “bath salts” in emergency departments across the state. Individuals with “bath salt” related medical questions may call the Michigan Toxic Hotline at (800) 648-6942. General information regarding “bath salts” is available on the Public Health website, [www.phdm.org](http://www.phdm.org).

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