



## **Cough Medicine Abuse**

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What Every Parent Needs to Know About Cough Medicine Abuse - (source: Partnership for a Drug-Free America) Some young people are abusing over-the-counter medicines containing dextromethorphan (DXM). While abuse of these products is not widespread, every parent should be aware of the facts about DXM.

### **Q: What is DXM?**

DXM is a safe and effective cough suppressant ingredient found in over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicines. When used according to directions, products containing DXM produce few side effects and have a long history of safety and effectiveness.

Some teens are attempting to get high by taking much larger than recommended doses of DXM in the form of OTC cough syrup, tablets and gel caps. In these high doses, DXM can produce hallucinogenic and dissociative effects.

### **Q: What are dissociative effects?**

Dissociative effects include distorted perceptions of sight and sound as well as feelings of detachment or separation from the environment and self.

### **Q: What are the effects of DXM abuse?**

The effects of DXM abuse vary with the amount taken. Common effects can include confusion, dizziness, double or blurred vision, slurred speech, impaired physical coordination, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, rapid heartbeat, drowsiness, numbness of fingers and toes, and disorientation. DXM abusers describe different "plateaus" ranging from mild distortions of color and sound to visual hallucinations and "out-of-body," dissociative, sensations, and loss of motor control. DXM is also sometimes abused with other drugs or alcohol, which can increase the dangerous physiological effects.

Scientific information provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse

### **Q: What are slang terms for dextromethorphan?**

Slang terms for dextromethorphan vary by product and region. The most common terms include: Dex, DXM, Robo, Skittles, Syrup, Triple-C and Tussin.

Terms for using dextromethorphan include: Robo-ing, Robo-tripping and skittling.