



DRUG FACT SHEET

# DXM: Cough Medicine

One out of 10 teens has abused cough medicine to get high. Often, these teens are finding information about cough medicine abuse on the Internet.

<b>Class of drug:</b>	DXM is a synthetically produced opioid chemically related to codeine, but does not directly stimulate opiate receptors in the brain. It acts as a hallucinogen/dissociative drug at high doses.
<b>Main active ingredient:</b>	DXM (dextromethorphan)
<b>What it looks like:</b>	It is available in liquid, tablet, capsule, gel cap and lozenge cough preparations. It is also available in powdered form.
<b>Street names:</b>	Robo, Dex, Tussin, Skittles, Triple C, Velvet
<b>How it is used:</b>	Orally in cough medicines; inhaled in powdered form
<b>Duration of high:</b>	The effects can last up to six hours.
<b>Withdrawal symptoms:</b>	Restlessness, muscle/bone aches, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes
<b>Effects:</b>	<p><b>Recommended doses</b> (.17 - .33 oz of med. containing 15 mg to 30 mg DXM)—cough suppression</p> <p><b><u>DXM abusers describe different “plateau” effects</u></b></p> <p><b>Small doses</b> (under 2 oz of med., first plateau)—mimic depressant effects: mild drunkenness</p> <p><b>Medium doses</b> (2 oz - 4 oz of med., second plateau) mimic stimulant effects with distorted visual perceptions</p> <p><b>Large doses</b> (4 oz - 10 oz or more of med., third and fourth plateaus)—mimic dissociative drugs: distorted perception of sight, time, body and sound, feelings of detachment, hallucinations, violence</p> <p><b>Physical</b>—Flushing, sweating, increased body temperature, nausea, seizures, high blood pressure, blurred vision, irregular heartbeat, numbness</p> <p><b>Long-term</b>—Liver damage (from medicines also containing acetaminophen) brain damage, coma, death</p>



In 2011, 2.7 percent of 8th graders, 5.5 percent of 10th graders and 5.3 percent of 12th graders reported using cough/cold medicine to get high.

## Illinois information

In Illinois, legislation passed in 2006 that banned the sale of DXM in its pure form. Although not mandated, some pharmacists have chosen to keep products containing DXM behind the counter.

(Drug Abuse Handbook, Steven B. Karch, MD, FFFLM, 2007)

Sources: NIDA Research Report Series, National Drug Intelligence Center. U.S. Department of Justice, The Partnership for a Drug-Free America, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Monitoring the Future Survey, Drug Abuse Handbook