

OTC drugs

WHAT OTC PRODUCTS ARE TEENS ABUSING?

Certain over the counter (OTC) drugs, such as cough and cold remedies, are abused by teens who want to get high. These products are widely available and can be purchased at supermarkets, drugstores, and convenience stores. Many OTC drugs intended to treat headaches, sinus pressure, or cold/flu symptoms contain the active ingredient dextromethorphan (DXM) and are commonly used by teens to get high. DXM can be extremely dangerous in excessive amounts, especially when mixed with alcohol or drugs.

DXM is found in more than 125 OTC products, most commonly in caplet or liquid form. A dangerous trend is that DMX can also be purchased in a bulk powder form over the Internet. Some websites encourage teens to abuse DMX and actually offer ideas for the best way to achieve a high.

You should be concerned if you notice that your child is taking excessive amounts of a cold and flu remedy, or if he or she continues to take medicine even after symptoms have subsided. If cough and cold medications seem to disappear from the medicine cabinet or if you find packages of cough and cold preparations in your child's room or backpack, he or she may be abusing the product.

OTHER MEDICATIONS Over-the-counter drug abuse also occurs with laxatives, diuretics, emetics, and diet pills, as teens try to lose weight. Young people may start by taking just a few diet pills but graduate to full addiction and dependence. Ephedrine, caffeine and phenylpropranolamine are just some of the dangerous and addictive substances found in diet pills. Herbal, (sometimes referred to as "natural," weight loss products can be just as dangerous as diet pills. All of these substances act as stimulants to the central nervous system and much like speed, can have serious and potentially fatal side effects.

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