
DEXTROMETHORPHAN

(Street Names: DXM, CCC, Triple C, Skittles, Robo, Poor Man's PCP)

Introduction:

Dextromethorphan (DXM) is an over-the-counter (OTC) cough suppressant commonly found in more than 125 cold medications. DXM is often abused in high doses by adolescents to generate euphoria and visual and auditory hallucinations. Illicit use of DXM is referred to on the street as "Robo-tripping" or "skittling." These terms are derived from the most commonly abused products, Robitussin and Coricidin, HBP, and Vicks.

Signs and symptoms of abuse may include:

Short-term effects

Impaired judgment, nausea, loss of coordination, headache, vomiting, loss of consciousness, numbness of fingers and toes, abdominal pain, irregular heartbeat, aches, seizures, panic attacks, psychosis, euphoria, cold flashes, dizziness, and diarrhea.

Long-term effects

Addiction, restlessness, insomnia, high-blood pressure, coma, or even death.

What does dextromethorphan do?

Depending on the dose, DXM's effects vary. Misuse of the drug creates both depressant and mild hallucinogenic effects. Users report a set of distinct dose-dependent "plateaus" ranging from a mild stimulant effect with distorted visual perceptions at low doses to a sense of complete dissociation from one's body.

The typical clinical presentation of DXM intoxication involves hyperexcitability, lethargy, ataxia (lack of coordination), slurred speech, sweating, hypertension, and/or nystagmus. The use of high doses of DXM in combination with alcohol or other drugs is particularly dangerous and deaths have been reported.

Another major concern is the risk incurred when abusers get high and engage in activities requiring reasonable judgment and quick reactions, like driving or swimming. The effects induced by overdose of **DXM** can make these activities deadly.

Abusers of DXM describe the following four dose-dependent "plateaus:"

Plateau	Dose (mg)	Behavioral Effects
1st	100–200	Mild stimulation
2nd	200–400	Euphoria and hallucinations

3rd	300– 600	Distorted visual perceptions Loss of motor coordination
4th	500-1500	Dissociative sedation

User Population:

The 2006 Monitoring the Future (MTF) showed that 4%, 5%, and 7% of 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students, respectively, reported nonmedical use of DXM during the previous year. This was the first year MTF added DXM to the survey for students.

Why are teens abusing products that contain dextromethorphan (DXM)?

DXM is a safe and effective cough suppressant when used as indicated on the product label. However, when taken in doses that far exceed the amount recommended, the ingredient may produce feelings of euphoria that some seek to get "high." A teenager looking to get high or experiment with drugs may turn to OTC cough and cold preparations that contain DXM because they are readily available at home or the local drug store. DXM can also be purchased in a bulk powder form on the Internet. Some Web sites encourage teenagers to abuse DXM and actually offer "recipes" for the best way to achieve a high.

Where do teens get them?

In Minnesota, teens over the age of 18 can buy OTC cough and cold remedies at any supermarket, drugstore, or convenience store. If they are not 18, teens may steal from local pharmacies who do not keep them behind the pharmacy counter. They can also get them from home, or order them over the Internet. They can surf the Web to find information and videos on what drugs to try and mix together.

What else can I do?

- **Talk to the student.** Speak with adolescents about the importance of carefully following directions on the labels of all OTC medications. Help them understand the dangers of abusing OTC cough and cold medications.
- **Be mindful of the season.** Adolescents can benefit from medicinal relief of cough, cold, and flu symptoms by taking OTC cough and cold preparations according to the instructions on the manufacturer's label. But be aware if they are using cough and cold medications outside of cold and flu season or if he or she continues to self-medicate after symptoms have subsided.
- **Be aware of empty (or full) OTC medication boxes.** Students may leave empty boxes at home, or may discard them at school.
- **Listen for “buzzwords” in conversations.** Using terms like, skittles, red, triple C, or “rolling” may indicate abuse of OTC cough and cold medication.

Information found at: <http://www.theantidrug.com/drug-information/otc-prescription-drug-abuse/over-the-counter-drug-abuse/dextromethorphan.aspx>

http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drugs_concern/dextro_m/dextro_m.htm