

# Over-the-Counter Cough Medicine Abuse

*Working together to protect teens*

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# Rx and OTC Medicine Abuse



*The Office of  
National Drug  
Control Policy  
reports that  
medicine abuse is  
our nation's  
**fastest-growing**  
drug problem.*

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# Teens Turn to Medicine Cabinets to Get High



- According to the 2014 Monitoring the Future Report, **around 3 percent of teens** have abused OTC cough medicines containing dextromethorphan (DXM) to get high.
- Teens mistakenly think this is a “safer” high.
- Unfortunately, many parents are not aware of this behavior.
- Detecting it is a challenge for parents and educators. **Awareness is the key to prevention.**

# What Is Dextromethorphan?

*A safe and effective cough suppressant ingredient found in 100+ OTC cough/cold medicines*

*The most widely used cough suppressant in the U.S.*

*Abused by teens taking 25 times or more than the recommended dose to get "high"*

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# How To Know If a Medicine Contains DXM

- *Identify products that contain DXM by reading the **ingredients list** or by looking for this **icon** on the package.*

**PARENTS:**

Learn about teen medicine abuse

[www.StopMedicineAbuse.org](http://www.StopMedicineAbuse.org)

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# What Are the Side Effects of Abuse?

- *Nausea and vomiting*
- *Abdominal pain*
- *Confusion*
- *Dizziness*
- *Double or blurred vision*
- *Slurred speech*
- *Impaired physical coordination*
- *Rapid heart beat*
- *Drowsiness*
- *Numbness of fingers and toes*
- *Disorientation*

# How Can You Prevent Abuse?

## *Step 1: Educate Yourself*

- *Know the Warning Signs*
  - *Empty cough medicine boxes or bottles in the trash a teen's room, backpack or school locker*
  - *Teens purchasing or using cough medicine when not ill*
  - *Missing boxes or bottles from home medicine supply*
  - *Hearing a teen use certain slang terms for DXM abuse, such as skittles, skittling, tussin, robo-tripping, robo, CCC, triple Cs, and Dexing/DXM*

# How Can You Prevent Abuse?

***Step 2:*** *Monitor Your Medicines*

***Step 3:*** *Talk to Your Teens*

***Step 4:*** *Talk to Other Parents*



# How Can You Prevent Abuse?

## *Step 5: Learn More*

- *Go to [StopMedicineAbuse.org](https://StopMedicineAbuse.org) to:*
  - *Order free brochures to read with your teen and share with other parents.*
  - *Connect with other parents through social media.*
  - *Learn about StopMedicineAbuse.org's **Five Moms** campaign.*
  - *Sign up for the monthly e-newsletter.*