

DXM (Dextromethorphan)

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DXM (dextromethorphan) is a legal cough-suppressing ingredient used in over-the-counter cough and cold medicines.

This medicine comes in a variety of forms. The most common is cough and cold medicines in capsule or liquid form.

As a street drug, DXM is known as “dex,” “robo,” “Vitamin D,” “skittles” and “Triple C,” among others.

DXM is a hallucinogen. This means it changes how the user’s brain perceives time and reality. The drugs affect how the user moves, reacts to situations, thinks, hears and sees. Hallucinogens can cause the user to hear voices, see images and feel things that do not exist.

Addiction

In small doses, DXM produces a mild stimulant effect with the user seeing colors, swirls or similar things with the eyes closed. In large doses (10 ounces or more), it produces the feeling of being out of your body (known as disassociation).

The effects of DXM last up to 6 hours.

Effects of DXM Use

DXM can cause the following effects:

- headache
- blurred vision
- dizziness
- sadness
- confusion
- paranoia.

Signs of DXM Use

Some signs of DXM use may include:

- the user taking large amounts of cough or cold medicine when he or she is not ill
- finding empty packaging in the user’s bedroom
- missing cold medicine from the medicine cabinet.

Medical Complications

DXM can cause increased body temperature, abdominal pain, throwing up (vomiting), irregular heartbeat, increased heart rate, numbness of fingers and toes, high blood pressure, loss of consciousness, seizures, brain damage and death.

Treatment

There is currently no medicine to treat DXM addiction. The abuse of DXM is so new that the best available treatment is education. It is important to be aware of this drug and know the possible dangers and the effects of abuse.

There is also cognitive-behavioral therapy that can help the user learn coping skills to help break the cycle. This type of therapy teaches the user to recognize the situations when he or she is most likely to use DXM, how to avoid those situations and how to cope with the problems related to drug abuse. Drug abuse recovery support groups may also be helpful.

If the abuse of DXM becomes severe or lasts over an extended period of time, substance abuse treatment may be needed.

Coricidin®HBP™ Cough and Cold

Coricidin®HBP™ is the most abused cold medicine. It contains the highest amount of DXM. Coricidin is not illegal. When used in safe doses, it helps treat symptoms of colds and upper respiratory allergies.

This medicine, which also contains chlorpheniramine maelate, can cause brain damage and death when taken in large doses. It can also increase heart rate which can cause heart attacks.

As a street drug, coricidin is mostly known as “Triple C (CCC)”. It may also be called “DXM” or “dex” (dextromethorphan), “candy” and “red devils,” among others.

Symptoms of coricidin use include dizziness, upset stomach (nausea), slurred speech, seizures, dilated pupils, loss of coordination and increased heartbeat.

Information adapted from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and National Drug Intelligence Center.