



StopMedicineAbuse.org

Fast Facts: Preventing Teen OTC Cough Medicine Abuse

From Home to Homeroom

A Wake Up Call for Parents

- Thirty-three percent of American high school teens know someone who has abused cough medicine, a wake up call for those parents who think that their teen is not affected or being exposed to the issue.
- Six percent of high school teens admit to abusing cough medicine containing dextromethorphan, or DXM, to get high in the past year.

Cough Medicine Abuse Does Not Happen By Accident

- While safe and effective when taken as directed, teens looking to get high from cough medicine take excessive amounts, sometimes 25 to 50 times the recommended dosage. This translates to multiple bottles or packages of medicine at one time.
- Teens often abuse cough medicines with other prescription drugs, illicit drugs, or alcohol.
- Even the best kid in the world doesn't have the same ability as adults to assess risk because the part of their brain that processes risk, the frontal cortex, doesn't finish developing until their mid 20s.

Parents Have the Power to Keep Teens Drug-free

- Research shows that kids who learn a lot from their parents about the risk of drug abuse are up to half as likely to use.
- Parents are not alone in their fight to prevent medicine abuse; reaching out to the school nurse can help parents learn more about the issue and access local resources.
- Parents can learn more about the Home to Homeroom campaign by logging onto www.StopMedicineAbuse.org
- Parents can interact and help raise awareness by joining online communities including:
 - [Five Moms Campaign](http://www.fivemoms.com) (www.fivemoms.com)
 - <http://www.Facebook.com/StopMedicineAbuse>
 - [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com/StopMedAbuse) (@StopMedAbuse)

Parent Alert: Warning Signs and How to Prevent Teen Cough Medicine Abuse

Warning Signs to Watch

- ✓ Empty blister packs or cough medicine bottles in your teen's trash or backpack
- ✓ Missing medication from your family's medicine cabinet
- ✓ Changes in friends, physical appearance, or sleeping or eating patterns
- ✓ Drop in grades or loss of interest in favorite activities

Safeguarding Your Teen

Parents should:

- ✓ Educate themselves by visiting StopMedicineAbuse.org
- ✓ Communicate the dangers of abuse to their pre-teens/teens and to other parents
- ✓ Safeguard their medicine cabinet and take a regular inventory
- ✓ Monitor their teen's Internet use

When to Seek Professional Help

- ✓ If parents think their teen is abusing medicines or illicit drugs, they should act immediately. Parents can locate drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs by calling the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration at 1.800.662.HELP or logging onto <http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>.

This information is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute medical advice.

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