



HOME 2
HOMEROOM

PREVENTING TEEN MEDICINE ABUSE FROM HOME TO HOMEROOM

Information from school nurses and the makers of over-the-counter medicines



StopMedicineAbuse.org

Teens face a host of pressures every day, from home to homeroom. One of those dangers involves a type of substance abuse that many parents are not aware of: medicine abuse. Multiple national surveys point to the abuse of both prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, such as cough medicine, as a significant substance abuse problem among teens.



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Good Medicines, Bad Behavior

Cough medicine abuse is a situation of 'good medicines, bad behavior!' While these medicines are safe and effective when used as directed, they can be dangerous when abused in extreme amounts, sometimes up to 50 times the recommended dosage, to get high. Teen cough medicine abuse does not happen by accident; it involves intentionally taking huge amounts of medication. The ingredient in OTC cough medicines that teens are abusing is dextromethorphan, or DXM.

“Cough medicine abuse does not happen by accident; it involves intentionally taking huge amounts of medication.”

Cough Medicine Abuse Can Touch Any Family



Even if your teens don't have an issue, they live in a world where their friends or classmates may be abusing. **Thirty-three percent of high school teens say they know someone who has abused cough medicine containing dextromethorphan, or DXM.** [Source: Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) 2009]

DXM abuse has become increasingly present in teen culture. There are hundreds of web sites and online communities promoting DXM abuse with instructions on how to achieve certain levels of highs. Social networking sites such as MySpace, YouTube, LiveJournal, and Facebook are also filled with detailed instructions and videos of DXM abuse. Through these outlets, users compare notes and approaches, and further promote this type of substance abuse.

Don't be afraid to monitor your teens' Internet usage and the programs they watch on television. In order for teens to take medicine abuse seriously, they need to know that their parents do not approve of any sort of substance abuse.

When it comes to the Internet and your teens, fan them, friend them, follow them.
Be sure you know what they're doing & where they're going online.

6% of high school teens admit to having abused cough medicine to get high in the past year.

[Source: National Institute on Drug Abuse and the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, 2009 Monitoring the Future – National Results on Adolescent Drug Use.]

Talking to Your Teen About Medicine Abuse

Making Conversations Count

6 Steps Parents Should Take to Prevent Cough Medicine Abuse

1. Educate yourself on the issue by visiting StopMedicineAbuse.org, NASN.org, and other credible sites.
2. Communicate the dangers of abuse to your kids as well as to other parents.
3. Safeguard your medicine cabinet and take a regular inventory to make sure you know what medicines you have and how much medication is in each bottle or package.
4. Monitor your teens' Internet use.
5. Get to know your teens' friends.
6. Seek the help of a professional if you see signs of abuse.

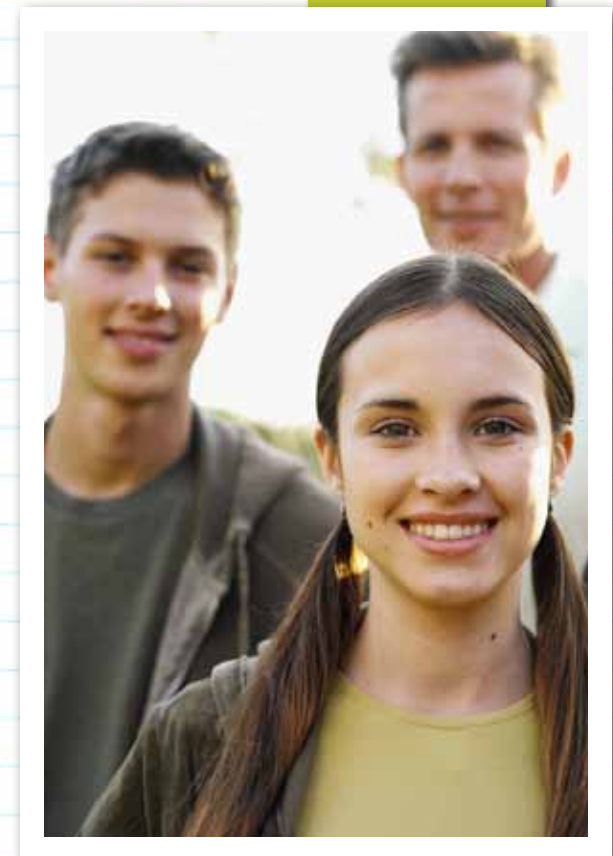
Parents, You Have More Power Than You Think.

Ongoing communication is the most important thing.

Teens need to know the truth about the risks of abuse and that you do not approve of any sort of substance abuse behavior. Talk to them, and talk to them often.

Teens listen, even if they act like they don't.

Parents are the most powerful voice in their teens' lives. Teens will take an issue like medicine abuse seriously when they know you take it seriously.



Talking to Your Teen About Medicine Abuse

Continued...

It can't be overstated: Parents do have the power to keep their kids drug-free. Include cough medicine abuse in your drug-abuse conversations with your kids so they understand the risks and that you do not approve of any sort of substance abuse behavior. The Partnership for a Drug-Free America has a broad range of tools and tips on how to get this conversation started at TimeToTalk.org. Log on to download a free TimeToTalk toolkit today.

Included among the resources are talking points to address common scenarios such as:

- Your teen is starting high school — and you want to remind him that he doesn't have to give in to peer pressure to drink or use drugs.
- Your teen is unresponsive to simple questions.
- Your teen comes home smelling of alcohol or cigarette smoke.
- Your teen has started to hang out with kids you don't know, and dropped his or her old friends.



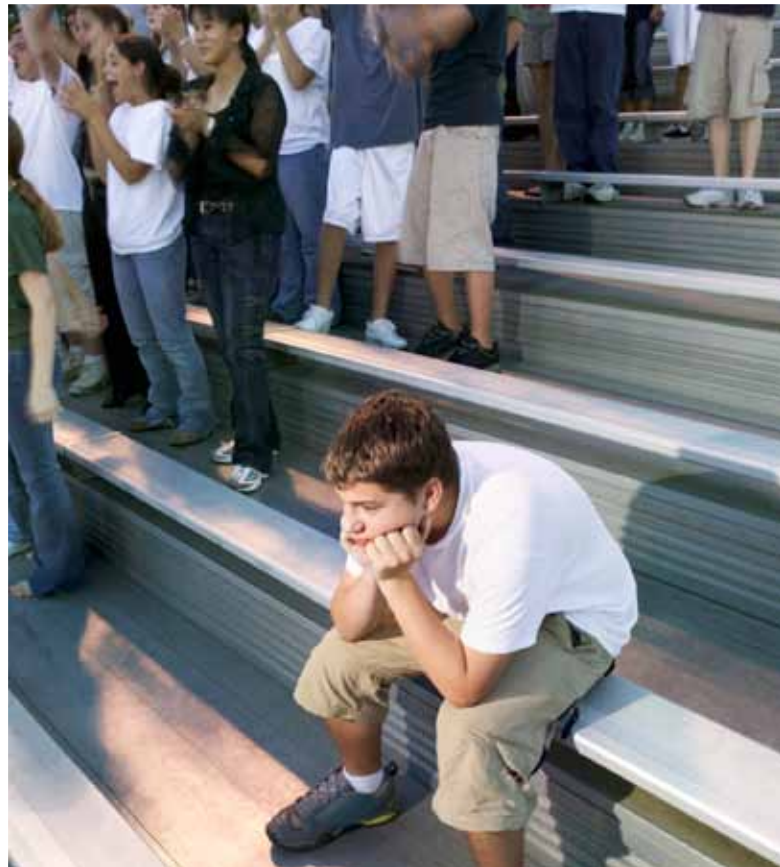
Have You Seen This Icon?

This educational icon appears on most bottles of cough medicine containing dextromethorphan and provides parents with a great reason to bring up the subject of cough medicine abuse with teens and to start a conversation about the dangers of medicine abuse.

Risks of Cough Medicine Abuse

It's important to know the risks of OTC cough medicine abuse in order to communicate them clearly and accurately to teens.

The risks increase with the amount of DXM abused. Those risks increase if the medicine being abused contains other active ingredients, or if teens abuse DXM along with alcohol, illicit drugs, or certain prescription drugs.



*Risks of OTC Cough Medicine Abuse **

- * Delusions
- * Panic attacks
- * Memory problems
- * Blurred vision
- * Stomach pain, nausea, and vomiting
- * High blood pressure and rapid heartbeat
- * Numbness of fingers and toes
- * Drowsiness and dizziness
- * Fever and headaches
- * Rashes and itchy skin
- * Loss of consciousness

Warning Signs that Your Teen Might be Abusing

What are the indications that a teen might be abusing OTC cough medicines? While many signs of possible drug abuse are also common characteristics of just being a teenager, they can also be cause for concern. If you notice some of these warning signs, take the time to talk to your teen.

If you see some of these warning signs and think your teen may be abusing drugs, don't wait. Get professional help and do it immediately. To locate the drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs nearest you, call 1.800.662.HELP or log onto <http://dasis3.samhsa.gov> to find a local drug abuse or alcohol abuse treatment program. You can also visit TimeToAct.org, a web site of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

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to find a local drug abuse or alcohol abuse treatment program

- Empty cough medicine boxes or bottles in the trash or in your child's room, or boxes or bottles missing from the medicine cabinet;
- Visiting pro-drug web sites that provide information on how to abuse dextromethorphan and other substances;
- Changes in friends, physical appearance, or sleeping or eating patterns;
- Declining grades;
- Loss of interest in hobbies or favorite activities;
- Hostile and uncooperative attitude;
- Unexplained disappearance of household money;
- Unusual chemical or medicinal smells on your child or in his or her room; or
- Hearing your child use certain slang terms for DXM abuse, such as Skittling, Tussing, Robo-Tripping, Triple Cs and Dex

Share What You Know With Other Parents

Are you involved in your community? Are you active in your teens' school, your religious community, or after-school activities? Do you share information with your family and friends online? If so, you can play an important role in helping to prevent medicine abuse in your community. Here are some simple steps you can take:

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- Print out this brochure and share copies the next time you are in a social situation with other concerned parents or peers.
- Talk to your teens' school nurse and find out more about what is being done in your school district and community.
- Join the Stop Medicine Abuse community on Facebook at facebook.com/StopMedicineAbuse
- Follow the Stop Medicine Abuse community on [@StopMedAbuse](https://Twitter.com) and encourage other parents you know to do so as well.
- Visit youtube.com/StopMedicineAbuse to view videos about the issue.



You can learn about other ways to take action in your community by visiting StopMedicineAbuse.org/take-action.

Home to Homeroom: Just for Teens

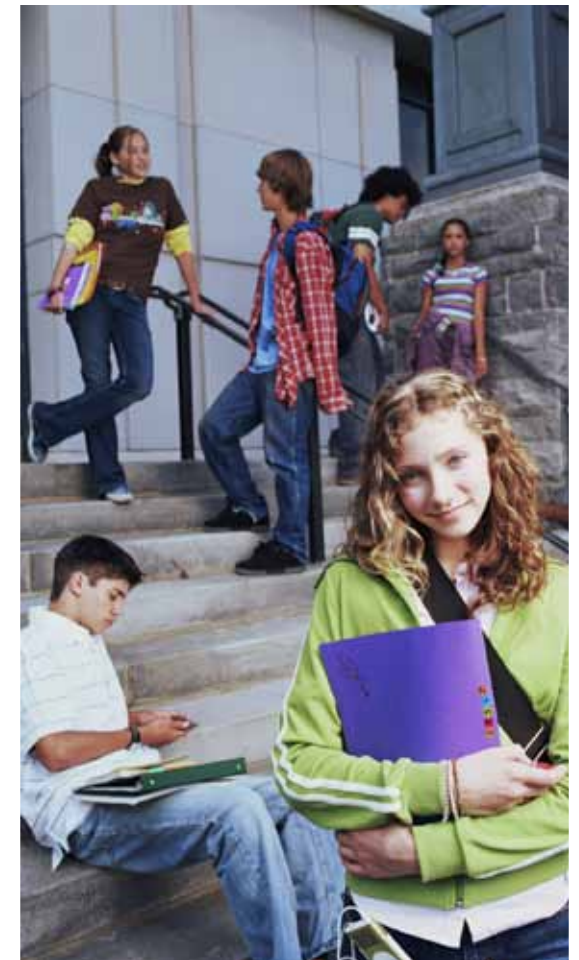
Real Teens, Real Stories About the Real Risks of Medicine Abuse

How much do you know about the real risks of abusing cough medicine? Hear the stories of other teens and young adults who have experienced the risks and consequences first hand. Visit DXMstories.com. If you know of a friend who could benefit from hearing these stories too, pass along the link. And if you think a friend may have a problem with any sort of substance abuse, talk to a trusted adult, such as your school nurse, for help.

Get Involved in Your Community

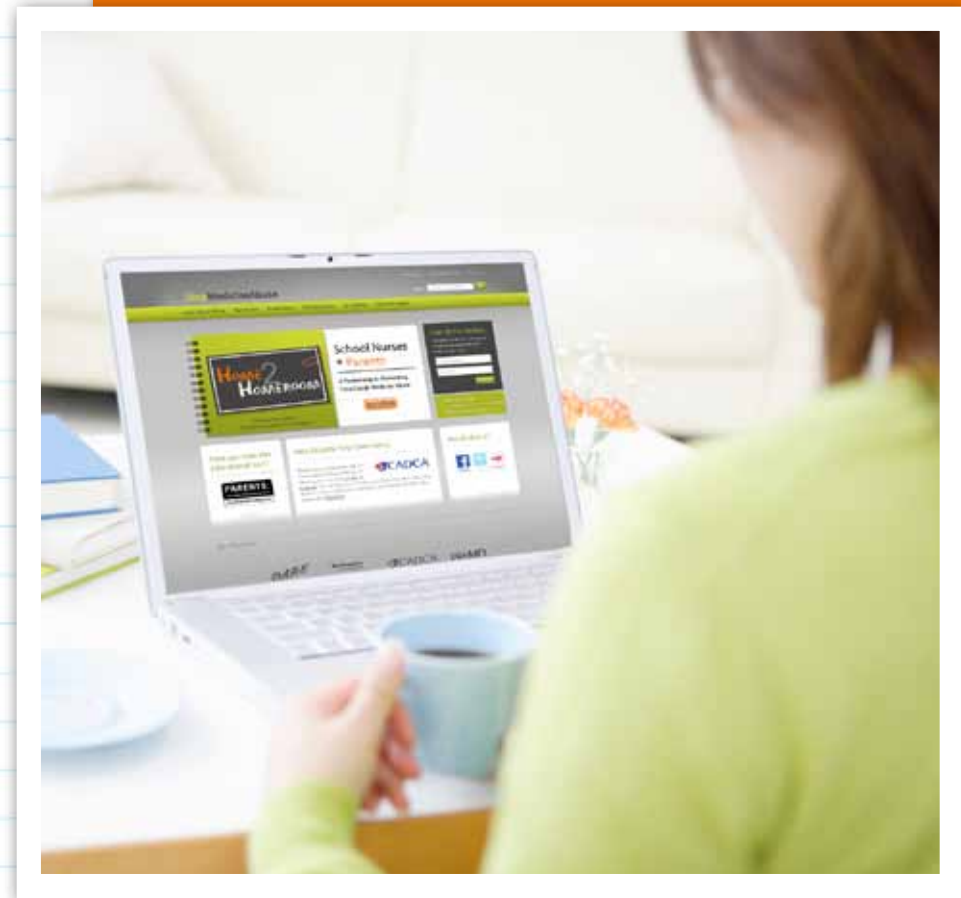
The Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) offers many ways for young people to play a greater role in drug prevention as well as other important problems in their community. If you are interested in playing a leadership role in your area, go to cadca.org or contact the Training and Technical Assistance Department by e-mail at training@cadca.org or by calling 1.800.54.CADCA, ext. 225, to learn more about the CADCA National Youth Leadership Initiative.

“ How much do YOU know about
the real risks
of abusing cough medicine? ”



Important Resources to Keep Teens Drug-Free

- CADCA.org
- DXMstories.com
- Facebook.com/StopMedicineAbuse.org
- NASN.org
- StopMedicineAbuse.org
- TimeToAct.org
- TimeToTalk.org
- Twitter.com/StopMedAbuse





StopMedicineAbuse.org

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