Drug Facts: DXM (Dextromethorphan)



- DXM is a cough suppressor found in more than 120 over -the-counter (OTC) cold medications .
- DXM is abused in high doses to experience euphoria and visual and auditory hallucinations.
- DXM is used by individuals of all ages, but its use by teenagers and young adults is of particular concern.

What is DXM?

DXM is a cough suppressor found in more than 120 over-the-counter (OTC) cold medications, either alone or in combination with other drugs such as analgesics (e.g., acetaminophen), antihistamines (e.g., chlorpheniramine), decongestants (e.g., pseudoephedrine), and/ or expectorants (e.g., guaifenesin). The typical adult dose for cough is 15 or 30 mg taken three to four times daily. The cough-suppressing effects of DXM persist for 5 to 6 hours after ingestion. When taken as directed, side effects are rarely observed.

What is its origin?

DXM users can obtain the drug at almost any pharmacy or supermarket, seeking out the products with the highest concentration of the drug from among all the OTC cough and cold remedies that contain it. DXM products and powder can also be purchased on the Internet.

What are common street names?

Common street names include:

- CCC, Dex, DXM, Poor Man's PCP, Robo, Rojo, Skittles, Triple C, and Velvet

What does it look like?

DXM can come in the form of:

- Cough syrup, tablets, capsules, or powder

How is it abused?

DXM is abused in high doses to experience euphoria and visual and auditory hallucinations. Users take various amounts depending on their body weight and the effect they are attempting to achieve. Some users ingest 250 to 1,500 milligrams in a single dosage, far more than the recommended therapeutic dosages described above.

Illicit use of DXM is referred to on the street as "Robo-tripping," "skittling," or "dexing." The first two terms are derived from the products that are most commonly abused, Robitussin and Coricidin HBP. DXM abuse has traditionally involved drinking large volumes of the OTC liquid cough preparations. More recently, however, use of tablet and gel capsule preparations has increased.

These newer, high-dose DXM products have particular appeal for users. They are much easier to consume, eliminate the need to drink large volumes of unpleasant-tasting syrup, and are easily portable and concealed, allowing an abuser to continue to abuse DXM throughout the day, whether at school or work. DXM powder, sold over the Internet, is also a source of DXM for use. (The powdered form of DXM poses additional risks to the user due to the uncertainty of composition and dose.)

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DXM is also distributed in illicitly manufactured tablets containing only DXM or mixed with other drugs such as pseudoephedrine and/ or methamphetamine.

DXM is abused by individuals of all ages, but its use by teenagers and young adults is of particular concern. This use is fueled by DXM's OTC availability and extensive "how to" use information on various websites.

What is its effect on the mind?

Some of the many psychoactive effects associated with high-dose DXM include:

Confusion, inappropriate laughter, agitation, paranoia, and hallucinations

Other sensory changes, including the feeling of floating and changes in hearing and touch

Long-term use of DXM is associated with severe psychological dependence. Abusers of DXM describe the following four dose-dependent "plateaus":

1st	1-00-200	Mild Stimulation
2nd	200-400	Euphoria and hallucinations
3rd	300-600	Distorted Visual Perceptions Loss of motor coordination
4th	500-1500	Out-of-body sensations

Connecticut Resources

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
www.ct.gov/dmhas

24/7 Access Line 1-800-563-4086

National Resources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov
1.800.662.HELP (4357)

National Institute on Drug Abuse
www.drugabuse.gov

What is its effect on the body?

DXM intoxication involves: over-excitability, lethargy, loss of coordination , slurred speech, sweating,

hypertension, and involuntary movement of the eyeballs.

What are its overdose effects?

DXM overdose can be treated in an emergency room setting and generally does not result in severe medical consequences or death. Most DXM-related deaths are caused by ingesting the drug in combination with other drugs. DXM-related deaths also occur from impairment of the senses, which can lead to accidents.

Which drugs cause similar effects?

Depending on the dose DXM can have effects similar to marijuana or ecstasy. In high doses its out-of-body effects are similar to those of ketamine or PCP.

What is its legal status in the United States? Rohypnol® is a Schedule IV substance under the Controlled DXM is a legally marketed cough suppressant that is neither a controlled substance nor a regulated chemical under the Controlled Substances Act.

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