

EDUCATING YOUTH

Talking with your teen or young adult can be challenging. Having a meaningful, ongoing conversation about drugs and alcohol, however, will help to keep your child healthy and safe.

Start the conversation to curb medication misuse and help with negative peer pressure today!

- ✓ Choose a good time and place and make sure you are free from distractions. Set down your phones and give your child 100% of your attention.
- ✓ Start the conversation with openness and without judgment.
- ✓ Understand your influence as a parent or guardian still effects your child's decisions. If you react negatively to a statement, the conversation may stall.
- ✓ Offer empathy and support.
- ✓ Be aware these topics may be difficult for your child to talk about. Patience is important.

CONTACT US



Phone: (681) 205-2287



www.wvdii.org



118 Capitol Street
Charleston, WV 25301

*Provided as part of a University of Charleston
School of Pharmacy Fellowship Project
and in partnership with the
West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute.*



A Parent's Guide to OTC Medication Safety



In Partnership with:

Rex the Rx™



COMMON MISUSED OTC MEDICATIONS

Dextromethorphan

Dextromethorphan, also called DXM, is an OTC cough medicine found in both liquid and pill forms. Robitussin[®] is a common brand name. When taken in large amounts, it can cause a feeling of extreme happiness that acts like PCP or ketamine. The high associated with misuse is commonly called 'robotripping.' Signs of misuse include blotchy skin, difficulty speaking, hallucinations, dizziness, and racing heartbeat.

Diet Pills

Diet pills are OTC supplements used to aid weight loss. They commonly contain energizing substances such as caffeine or bitter orange. Diet pills can have addictive properties. Perhaps the most obvious form of abuse occurs in eating disorders when used to aid excessive weight loss. In extreme amounts, they can cause a slight feeling of intoxication, as well. Symptoms of misuse include racing heartbeats, nervousness, vision problems, dehydration, and paranoia.

Laxatives

Laxatives are medicines that help cause bowel movements. They are most commonly used to treat constipation. Laxative misuse typically occurs when a person is trying to lose weight. An eating disorder is suspected with most cases of laxative misuse. Frequent, watery diarrhea leading to dehydration occurs upon initial misuse. Eventually, there may be several weeks without a bowel movement. This can cause cramps and bloating.

Caffeine

Caffeine is one of the world's most widely used drugs. Caffeine misuse typically results in increased energy or a feeling of extreme happiness. It is found in coffee, soda, and energy drinks, but it is also available as a dietary supplement. Insomnia, anxiety, depression, muscle twitching, racing heartbeat, and lack of focus are common. Withdrawal symptoms after long term use include headache, nausea, vomiting, and muscle pain/stiffness.

Motion Sickness Pills

When used as intended, motion sickness pills prevent or relieve nausea and dizziness associated with movement. Two OTC preparations include diphenhydramine (Benadryl) and dimenhydrinate (Dramamine). In large amounts, they can cause similar effects of street drugs, such as drunkenness and hallucinations. Signs of misuse include racing heartbeats, depression, itching, and pain in the eyes.

"Teens and young adults who learn about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50% less likely to abuse drugs."

- Consumer Med Safety
(www.drugpolicy.org)

"90% of prescription drug abuse starts during teenage years"

- drugfree.org

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are those that are sold without a prescription. OTC medicines treat a variety of illnesses such as pain, coughs and colds, diarrhea, constipation, acne, and other ailments.

Know the Facts

"Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines are drugs you can buy without a prescription. They are safe and effective when you follow the directions on the label and as directed by your health care professional."

– FDA, Understanding Over-the-Counter Medicines
(www.fda.gov) *

"Taking OTC medicines still has risks. Some interact with other medicines, supplements, foods, or drinks. Others cause problems for people with certain medical conditions."

– U.S. National Library of Medicine, Over-the-Counter Medicines
(www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/overthecountermedicines.html)*

*As found in *Prescription for Disaster, How Teens Misuse Medicine*, a resource provided by Drug Enforcement Administration.

