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New Drug Trends Parents Need to Know About.

By Officer Nick Pasquarosa

The new trends in recreational drug use are both disturbing and dangerous. Make no mistake, alcohol and marijuana are still the most used and abused drugs by our young people. Parents and guardians should remain vigilant about the use of those substances and the dangers inherent therein. What we have seen recently is a spike in the misuse of over the counter and prescription medications. As a practical matter obtaining these substances is far easier and much cheaper than obtaining either beer or weed.

Dextromethorphan is a substance found in nearly all cough medicine. DXM, as it's called on the street, when taken in overdoses gives disassociate effects similar to those of PCP and ketamine. The common and desired effects include euphoria, enhanced awareness, impaired judgment, loss of coordination, dizziness, nausea, seizures, panic attacks, psychosis, brain damage, and addiction. Cough medicine is easily accessible at the supermarket or the corner store. It is either purchased or more commonly shoplifted in all its forms at no cost to the taker. Teens have been reported to drink three or four bottles of cough syrup in one day and take up to twenty to thirty tablets of Coricidin at once. There have been reported cases of overdoses that have resulted in coma and death.

Prescription medication is just as easily obtained. Drugs seized from adolescents normally come from the either the home of the offender or the home of a friend. Anything goes; mood altering drugs, pain pills and medication used to treat ADD and ADHD are most commonly recovered. Some teens operate off of the false assumption that prescription medications are beneficial based upon their observations of others taking the meds. They do not take into account that the medication was prescribed under a doctor's supervision often times specifically based upon the body chemistry of the patient. They are as easy to get as going to the bathroom. Most people simply put their medications in the cabinet and pay no mind to any kind of inventory. A guest in your home could easily take a handful of pills and you would probably never know.

When I have come across kids who have taken pills the investigation starts out medical in nature and not criminal. Many students who have taken over the counter or prescription medication typically end up in medical distress and earn a trip to the hospital. Criminal ramifications always follow but the first concern is for the health and welfare for the person affected. In several cases the adolescent did not know what they took complicating the delivery of effective treatment.

This particular drug problem affects a cross section of young people. The use of these substances is not always for a recreational high but often with a specific intent. I have recovered pills from students who wanted to raise self esteem, loose weight and get better grades.

Take steps to protect you children and your child's friends:

- Lock up your prescription medication,
- Monitor your over the counter medication,
- Properly dispose of excess or unneeded pills and
- Learn the varied symptoms of drug intoxication.

Check the below resources for more information.

[Drug Enforcement Administration – Resources For Parents and Teachers](#)
[Office of National Drug Control Policy](#)
www.streetdrugs.com

Information from was used as a resource for this item. Their source was: DEA
Diversion Control Program, August 2001.