ASK THE EXPERT

A conversation with Steve Pasierb, President and CEO of The Partnership at Drugfree.org

As President and CEO of The Partnership at Drugfree.org, Steve Pasierb is a national leader on the topic of teen drug use and abuse. He is a frequent commentator for the national and local news media on drug safety issues and the current trends in teen drug use. In collaboration with Be Smart. Be Well., Steve is working to raise awareness of prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse and offers advice for keeping kids safe from drug use and abuse. See the complete video at besmartbewell.com/spotlight-newsletter.

BESMARTBEWELL: Why are young people abusing prescription drugs?

STEVE PASIERB: Kids are coming to prescription drug abuse for very specific reasons. Some aim to get high as a way of dealing with stress and depression in their lives. Some children are very tactical; they use prescription drugs in order to do better at school. So kids usually have a very sophisticated usage approach when it comes to these drugs. It is not just as simple as using them to go out and get wrecked.

BESMARTBEWELL: What over-the-counter drugs are most abused by teens and young adults?

STEVE PASIERB: What kids seek in over-the-counter drugs is an active ingredient in cough medicines, dextromethorphan, which gives them a drunk, dreamy, disassociated kind of feeling. Many kids become dependent on it, though. It has transitioned from a fringe behavior to something more mainstream. One in 10 kids in America have abused cough medicine.

BESMARTBEWELL: What is the right age to talk with your kid about drugs, and how do I go about it?

STEVE PASIERB: The average age of first-time drug use in America is about 13-and-a-half years old. We encourage parents to have an age-sensitive conversation, not a “big drug talk.” If your kids are in middle school, you can say: “What are you hearing in school? What is going on? Who are your friends?” That gets you in. As your kid ages, you should ratchet up the specificity of the conversation. Try, “What have you heard about this Ecstasy drug? Anybody in school talk about it?” This way, you’re not giving them a lecture on the harms of Ecstasy; you’re having a general conversation. The net of the conversation to your kid is that you’re worried, and that this isn’t an acceptable thing in your lives and family. That type of conversation is incredibly powerful, but it isn’t a lecture or a threat. Just a conversation.

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# PRESCRIPTION AND OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUG GUIDE
A parent’s guide to the legal drugs kids are using and abusing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Codeine</th>
<th>Fentanyl</th>
<th>Morphine</th>
<th>Oxycodone HCL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHAT IS IT?</strong></td>
<td>Codeine is a prescription pain reliever that may be used to relieve mild to moderate pain and to reduce coughing when used in combination with other medications.</td>
<td>Fentanyl is a powerful pain reliever typically used to treat severe pain or pain after surgery.</td>
<td>Morphine is a powerful prescription pain reliever prescribed to relieve moderate to severe pain and is highly addictive.</td>
<td>Oxycodone HCL is a prescription pain reliever that may be prescribed to relieve moderate to severe pain. It can be combined with other medications, including acetaminophen and ibuprofen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BRAND/COMMERCIAL NAMES</strong></td>
<td>(Limited selection as there are over 50 brand names of codeine alone and in combination with other medications) Brontex®, Capital and Codeine®, Fiorinal® with Codeine (as a combination product containing Codeine Phosphate, Aspirin, Butabarbitol, and Caffeine), Guiattussin® with Codeine, Mytussin® AC Cough Syrup, Robafen AC® Syrup, Robitussin A-C® Syrup, Tussi-Organidin®-S, Tylenol with Codeine (No. 2, No. 3, No. 4)®</td>
<td>Actiq®, Fentora®, Duragesic®, Sublimaze®</td>
<td>Roxanol®, Duramorph®</td>
<td>OxyContin®, Percocet®, Tylox®, Roxicodone®, Roxicet®</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STREET NAMES</strong></td>
<td>T3s, AC/DC, Codies</td>
<td>Apache, China Girl, Patches, Dance Fever</td>
<td>M, Miss Emma, Monkey, White stuff</td>
<td>Oxy, O/C, Orange Crush, Oscar, Ocean, Blues Clues-Roxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOOKS LIKE</strong></td>
<td>Tablet, Capsule, Liquid</td>
<td>Dissolving tablet, Liquid for injection, Lollipop, Lozenge, Transdermal patch, White powder</td>
<td>Tablets, Liquid, Powder, Patch (included in part of fentanyl patch Duragesic©)</td>
<td>Tablets, Liquid, Powder, Patch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOW IT IS USED</strong></td>
<td>Swallowed</td>
<td>Injected, Smoked, Snorted</td>
<td>Injected, Swallowed, Smoked</td>
<td>Swallowed, Snorted, Injected, Rectally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DANGEROUS BECAUSE</strong></td>
<td>Side effects when abused include: Difficulty breathing or swallowing, rash, itching, hives, changes in vision, seizures, and fast, pounding or irregular heartbeat</td>
<td>Serious side effects include: Weak or shallow breathing, severe weakness, drowsiness, confusion, cold or clammy skin, feeling light-headed, fainting, coma</td>
<td>Both physical and psychological addiction can develop quickly with morphine. Serious side effects of use include: Sedation, respiratory depression and arrest, unconsciousness, coma, death</td>
<td>Abuse of Oxycodone can result in severe respiratory depression and death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEEN USAGE</strong></td>
<td>1 in 5 teens have abused a prescription pain reliever</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IMPORTANT TO KNOW</strong></td>
<td>Sixty percent of teens who have abused prescription painkillers did so before age 15.</td>
<td>Nine million teens surveyed say they can get prescription drugs in a day.</td>
<td>Abusing prescription painkillers is just as dangerous, addictive and deadly as using heroin.</td>
<td>Twenty percent of teens report buying pain relievers from a friend or relative or taking the drug from a friend or relative without asking (Rx report from ONDCP, 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIGNS OF ABUSE</strong></td>
<td>Nausea, constipation, confusion, sedation, respiratory depression and arrest, addiction, unconsciousness, coma, euphoria/feelings of joy, drowsiness/lethargy, concentration problems, change in physical activity, pinpoint pupils, appetite changes</td>
<td>Nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, constipation, dizziness, drowsiness, headache, swelling, unconsciousness</td>
<td>Nausea, constipation, confusion</td>
<td>Constipation, nausea, sedation, dizziness, vomiting, headache, dry mouth, sweating, weakness, mental clouding, pinpoint pupils</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# Prescriptions and Over-the-Counter Drug Guide

A parent’s guide to the legal drugs kids are using and abusing

## Hydrocodone bitartrate with acetaminophen

**What is it?**
Hydrocodone bitartrate is a prescription medication often combined with acetaminophen (which increases the effect of the hydrocodone) to relieve moderate to severe pain. In the United States there are over 200 products containing hydrocodone with acetaminophen (Vicodin, Lortab). Hydrocodone is also combined with aspirin (Lortab ASA), ibuprofen (Vicoprofen) and antihistamines (Hycomine).

**How it is used**
- Swallowed

**Dangerous because**
Serious side effects include: Sedation, respiratory depression and arrest, unconsciousness, coma, death

**Teen usage**
1 in 5 teens have abused a prescription pain reliever

**Important to know**
Most teens get their prescription drugs from their own family’s medicine cabinet. Fifty-five percent of teens agree it is easy to get prescription drugs from their parent’s medicine cabinets.

**Signs of abuse**
Nausea, constipation, confusion, euphoria, mental clouding, changes in sleep (increase when using, insomnia/irritability when withdrawing), acting as if in “stupor,” pinpoint pupils, problems with academics/extra-curricular activities

## Barbiturates

**What is it?**
Barbiturates are central nervous system depressants that slow down the mind and body, causing drowsiness and sleepiness.

**How it is used**
- Injected, Swallowed

**Dangerous because**
Higher doses cause irritability, paranoia, suicidal thoughts, unusual excitement, fever, life-threatening withdrawal, impaired memory, judgment and coordination.

**Teen usage**
1 in 11 12th graders have abused sedatives and tranquilizers

**Important to know**
Barbiturates mimic alcohol intoxication, causing mild euphoria, relief of anxiety and sleepiness. Abuse can lead to physical dependence and barbiturate withdrawal can be life-threatening.

**Signs of abuse**
Slurred speech, shallow breathing, sluggishness, fatigue, disorientation, lack of coordination, dilated pupils

## Benzodiazepines

**What is it?**
Benzodiazepines are among the most commonly prescribed depressant medications in the United States today. More than 15 different types of benzodiazepine medications exist. They are prescribed for relaxation, calmness, and relief from anxiety and tension. Some benzodiazepines are used to treat seizures or insomnia or other conditions.

**How it is used**
- Injected, Swallowed

**Dangerous because**
Side effects of abusing benzodiazepines include: Impaired motor coordination, drowsiness, lethargy, fatigue, impaired thinking and memory, confusion, depression, altered vision, slurred speech, staggering, vertigo, tremors, respiratory depression, nausea, constipation, dry mouth, abdominal discomfort, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea.

**Teen usage**
1 in 11 12th graders have abused sedatives and tranquilizers in their lifetime

**Important to know**
Abusing sedatives with alcohol can slow both the heart rate and respiration and possibly lead to death. Abuse can lead to physical and psychological dependency with serious withdrawal symptoms, including sweating, tremor, vomiting, anxiety, insomnia and muscle pain. Long-term effects of benzodiazepines include: Slowed thinking, memory, and judgment

**Signs of abuse**
Long-term effects of benzodiazepines include: Slowed reflexes, mood swings, hostility and erratic behavior, euphoria, disorientation, confusion, slurred speech, muscle weakness, lack of coordination, impaired thinking, memory, and judgment

## Flunitrazepam

**What is it?**
Flunitrazepam may be prescribed to treat insomnia or given prior to anesthesia. It is a derivative of benzodiazepine. It is not available in the United States but is available in 60 other countries.

**How it is used**
- Swallowed, Crushed, Snorted

**Dangerous because**
Side effects of abusing flunitrazepam include: Impaired motor coordination, drowsiness, lethargy, fatigue, impaired thinking and memory, anterior grade amnesia, nausea, constipation, dry mouth, abdominal discomfort, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea.

**Teen usage**
1 in 11 12th graders have abused sedatives and tranquilizers in their lifetime

**Important to know**
Rohypnol has become infamous for being known as the “date rape drug” due to its ability to be easily mixed into liquids and fast acting side effects, coupled with short term memory loss. Abusing sedatives with alcohol can slow both the heart rate and respiration and possibly lead to death.

**Signs of abuse**
Slowed reflexes, long periods of sleep or drowsiness, memory loss, disorientation, confusion, slurred speech, muscle weakness, lack of coordination, impaired thinking, memory, and judgment

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## Amphetamine

### What is it?
It is a stimulant because it mimics the effect adrenaline has on the body. Amphetamines may be prescribed for the treatment of ADHD and a sleep disorder called narcolepsy.

### BRAND/COMMERICAL NAMES
Biphedrine®, Dexedrine®, Concerta®, Bennies, Black Beauties, Crosses, Hearts, LA Turnaround, Speed, Truck Drivers, Uppers, Addies, A Train

### STREET NAMES
JIF, MPH, R-ball, Skippy, The Smart Drug, Vitamin R

### LOOKS LIKE
Tablets, Capsules, Powder

### HOW IT IS USED
Injected, Swallowed, Snorted

### DANGEROUS BECAUSE
Can cause rapid or irregular heartbeat, delirium, panic, psychosis, and heart failure.

### TEEN USAGE
1 in 10 teens have abused Adderall or Ritalin

### IMPORTANT TO KNOW
Teens (12 to 17 years) who abuse stimulants are more likely to engage in other delinquent behavior such as fighting or selling drugs. Teens (12 to 17 years) who abuse prescription stimulants are more likely to experience a major depressive episode.

### SIGNS OF ABUSE
Reduced appetite, weight loss, nervousness, insomnia, aggressiveness, impulsive behavior, dilated pupils (can’t see eye color), high body temperature

### Dextromethorphan (DXM)

### What is it?
Dextromethorphan (DXM) is an ingredient found in any cold medicine with the “DM” or “TUSS” in the title or name. In fact, DXM is in almost half of all of the OTC drugs sold in the United States, making it easy to get, cheap, and legal.

### BRAND/COMMERICAL NAMES
Any Cold Medicine with “DM” or “TUSS” in the title such as: Dimetapp DM®, Nyquil®, Robitussin®, Theraflu®, Vick’s Formula 448®

### STREET NAMES
Orange Crush, Triple C’s, C-C-C, Red Devils, Skittles, Dex, Vitamin D, Robo, Robo-trippin, Robo-dosing

### LOOKS LIKE
Cough medicine sold over the counter in drug stores and general stores

### HOW IT IS USED
Swallowed, Snorted

### DANGEROUS BECAUSE
Serious side effects include: Nausea, loss of coordination, headache, vomiting, loss of consciousness, numbness of fingers and toes, abdominal pain, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, seizures, panic attacks, psychosis, brain damage, addiction, insomnia, coma, death

### TEEN USAGE
1 in 10 teens have abused cough medicine to get high

### IMPORTANT TO KNOW
Only 48 percent of teens believe taking cough medicine to get high is risky. Kids as young as 12 years are trying or using prescription drugs to get high.

### SIGNS OF ABUSE
Nausea, loss of coordination, headache, vomiting, slurred speech, disassociation

### Methylphenidate

### BRAND/COMMERICAL NAMES
Ritalin®

### STREET NAMES
JIF, MPH, R-ball, Skippy, The Smart Drug, Vitamin R

### LOOKS LIKE
Tablets

### HOW IT IS USED
Injected, Swallowed, Snorted

### DANGEROUS BECAUSE
Increased blood pressure, heart rate and body temperature; feelings of hostility and paranoia; serious cardiovascular complications, including stroke, dilated pupils

### TEEN USAGE
1 in 10 teens have abused Adderall or Ritalin

### IMPORTANT TO KNOW
Many teens abuse prescribed stimulant medication to help them cram for exams or suppress their appetite.

### SIGNS OF ABUSE
Decreased sleep and appetite, increased alertness, attention span, energy

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