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Over The Counter - ALERT

Parents: Over The Counter medication isn't *always* safe

Question: My son said that his friends are “robotripping.” Could you tell me what this is and is it dangerous?

Answer: “Robotripping” is the nickname for abuse of **Robitussin®** cough syrup or any cold and flu pills or syrup that contains dextromethorphan (which causes hallucinations similar to PCP). Many emergency rooms across the United States are reporting increased numbers of teens who are abusing over-the-counter (OTC) cold and cough preparations. **Robitussin®**, Coricidin HBP®, Vicks NyQuil® and Vicks Formula 44® are the most common cold drugs abused because they are legal, easy to get and inexpensive.

! Watch for the symptoms of abuse which include: sweating, high body temperature, dry mouth, blurred vision, hallucinations, delusions, nausea, stomach pains, vomiting, irregular heart beat, high blood pressure, numbness in toes and fingers, red face, headache, loss of consciousness (If child is unresponsive or appears to be in serious distress, call 911 immediately).

What Parents Can Do To Prevent Cough Medicine Abuse

Educate Yourself

- Educate yourself about cough medicine abuse and share this information with others who are in contact with your teen, such as school administrators, coaches and counselors
- Make sure you're aware of the signs of cough medicine abuse and what to watch out for.

Communicate with Your Teens

- Be clear that you do not want your teen taking medicine without your knowledge.
- Teach your teens and younger children to respect medicines. Medicines are important tools in healthcare, but they must be used according to directions.
- Make sure your teen understands that abusing cough medicine -- just as abusing illegal drugs -- can be very dangerous.

Safeguard Medications at Home and Other Places

- Know what medicines are in your home and pay attention to quantities.
- Keep all medications out of reach and out of easily accessible places like medicine cabinets.
- If your child needs medications during school hours, speak with school officials about medicine policies in the school.