

# October is National Medicine Abuse awareness month

October is National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month seeks to raise awareness of the dangers of prescription (Rx) drug abuse and over-the-counter cough medicine abuse. It was founded and supported by Community Anti Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), an international membership organization representing more than 5,000 community anti-drug coalitions in the U.S. and abroad.

According to CADCA, one in 25 youths ages 12 through 17 has abused cough medicine to get high from its dextromethorphan (DXM) ingredient, and one in five young adults has abused a prescription drug.

DXM is a cough suppressant and opioid derivative used in more than 100 over-the-counter medicines. It is safe for ingestion and not habit-forming when taken as directed. However, illicit and excessive use of DXM has recently risen and this type of use has negative effects.

While not physically addictive when taken in recommended doses, DXM has the potential to be addictive if taken in large doses or administered via an alternate method (such as snorting or injecting). DXM appeals to teens due to the ease of access and low cost. Ten percent of teenagers have abused cough medicines (many which contain DXM) to get a high.

You can prevent DXM abuse by taking to your teens and younger children about the physical and mental health risks of DXM abuse:

- Reinforce to your teen that just because a drug is a prescription does not mean that is not dangerous or addictive.
- Set clear rules that your child must not take medicine without your knowledge.
- Keep medicines away from the reach of teens and young children.
- Pay attention to medicine quantities and watch for significant changes.
- Discussing the negative effects of DXM abuse (and drug abuse in general) is one of the best ways to prevent teen drug abuse.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) maintains that prescription and over-the-counter drugs are, after marijuana and alcohol, the most commonly abused substances by Americans 14 and older.

Some medications have psychoactive properties and are taken for reasons or in ways or amounts not intended by a doctor, or taken by someone other than the person for whom they are prescribed.

Prescription and over-the-counter

drugs can be equally as addictive and dangerous and put users at risk for other adverse health effects, including overdose, especially when taken along with other drugs or alcohol.

Before prescribing drugs, a health care provider considers a patient's health conditions, current and prior drug use, and other medicines to assess the risks and benefits for a patient.

The Community Committee of the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition serves as a think tank to examine community needs through data, implementation of alcohol and substance abuse awareness campaigns, educating the public regarding ongoing and emerging alcohol and substance abuse trends and pursuing viable funding streams to address gaps in community services.

According to a Community Survey of 1408 Glen Cove residents conducted by the Coalition in 2016, prescription drug use was an area of concern.

For more information about National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month please visit [www.CADCA.org](http://www.CADCA.org) or the National Institute on Drug Abuse at [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov).

For more information about SAFE call (516) 676-2008 or visit [www.safeglen-cove.org](http://www.safeglen-cove.org).