

## “Syrup”

A recent publication by the NIDA (National Institute of Drug Abuse) indicates two new emerging commonly abused substances: “syrup” and “molly”.

They indicate that drinking prescription-strength cough syrup containing codeine and promethazine mixed with soda was referenced frequently in rap music beginning in the late 90s and has now become increasingly popular among youth in several areas of the country. Users commonly refer to the drug as “syrup,” “purple drank,” “sizzurp,” and/or “lean”. The codeine in these cough syrups is an opioid that can produce relaxation and euphoria when consumed in sufficient quantities. Also, promethazine is an antihistamine that also acts as a sedative. Sometimes users flavor the mixture with the addition of hard candies.

“Syrup” poses a risk because it contains codeine. Codeine and other opioids present a high risk of fatal overdose due to their effect of depressing the central nervous system, which can slow or stop the heart and lungs. Often, users mix “syrup” with alcohol, which greatly increases this risk. Deaths from prescription opioid medications now outnumber overdose deaths from all other drugs (including cocaine and heroin). Interestingly, codeine-promethazine cough syrup has been linked to the overdose deaths of some prominent rap musicians.

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