

SIZZURP – A DANGEROUS NEW DRINK

A new concoction called “Sizzurp”, or “Purple Drank”, is being glorified in pop culture as a method of getting high and is gaining popularity among youth, especially since it is cheap and easy to make.

Sizzurp is an addictive concoction that gets the user high by combining its main ingredient of prescription-strength cough syrup containing codeine and promethazine with clear sodas such as Sprite or Mountain Dew. The addition of a crushed Jolly Rancher candy adds a sweeter flavor to the syrup. It is typically sipped out of Styrofoam cups.



Codeine is a part of a group of drugs called narcotic pain medicines. It is mainly responsible for the euphoric feeling after drinking sizzurp. Because codeine is an opiate, it can be highly addictive. Promethazine is a sedative antihistamine that is frequently prescribed to treat motion sickness and insomnia and can enhance codeine's effects. Promethazine causes motor skill impairment, lethargy, extreme drowsiness, as well as a dissociative feeling from all other parts of the body, specifically the stomach and digestive system.

Recipes for making sizzurp can easily be found online. Other versions show it can be made using over-the-counter cough syrups with DXM (dextromethorphan), such as Robitussin, although they don't consider that formula to be a “true” sizzurp, and the effects with DXM are more hallucinatory than purely euphoric. The addition of other ingredients such as vodka or crushed pills also increases the risks associated with the drink.

Sizzurp can create dangerous side effects, including death if taken at high dosage. Other side effects can include drowsiness, slower heart rate, fever, slurred speech, raspy voice, seizure, lack of coordination, and liver damage. Potentially fatal consequences include overdose, and respiratory or cardiac arrest. Purple drank is confirmed or suspected to have caused the deaths of several prominent users including rappers (earlier this year, rapper Lil Wayne was hospitalized in serious condition after reportedly binging on sizzurp), and professional sports players.

Sizzurp first gained popularity in the underground rap scene in Houston, Texas. Today it is very popular among rappers, and the drink is glamorized in their music, making it all that more appealing to teenagers. Songs like Three 6 Mafia's *Rainbow Colors* and *Sippin' on Some Syrup* or albums by Big Moe titled *City of Syrup* and *Purple World* all reference the drink in their lyrics.

There are other street names for sizzurp. The purple hue of the cough syrup gives it its color, hence the most popular name, purple drank. It is also called lean, purp, Texas tea (due to its origin in Texas), candy drank, purple jelly, and dirty sprite.

The purple color of Promethazine/codeine cough syrup



THE NEW CRAZE... "CRAZY CLOWN"

We all know that there are some scary clowns out there. Stephen King's "Pennywise the Dancing Clown" from the novel "IT" comes to mind, but while this child-killing clown is [evil](#), there is another clown in the [competition](#)...and this one is known as "Crazy Clown".

What is it? The latest synthetic drug to hit the Midwest. Worse yet, investigators, and even scientists, have never seen anything like it and are not sure what the active ingredients are in Crazy Clown. This makes it extremely difficult for emergency personnel and hospitals to treat patients experiencing serious and sometimes deadly side effects of the drug.

Crazy Clown looks like innocent herbs sealed in a small foil packet to which additional substances are added to make it smell sweet. The colorful packaging and claim that it is an "herbal supplement" are enticing young people to find out about the "fun, madness" it brings. It is sold in head shops and can even be found at some gas stations.



"What we're seeing is synthetic drugs are kind of blossoming in terms of new names, new drugs, new chemicals coming along rapidly, being packaged in such a way that it fools the usually young buyer into thinking because it's packaged the way it is that it must be OK, it must be safe," says Dan Duncan with the local office of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

The Centers for Disease Control began investigating the drug after it sent eight users in Georgia to a hospital and it is now linked to many more emergency room visits and deaths across the country. And don't be fooled thinking that it doesn't happen here, as two 16-year-old Omaha area students hit National news after they tried Crazy Clown, and it almost killed one of them.

Crazy Clown is a dangerous drug that is smoked or burned in a small bowl and inhaled. Some reported symptoms include: nausea, vomiting, dry mouth, foaming at the mouth, increased blood pressure, anxiety, paranoia, weakness, cardiac problems, psychotic episodes, paralysis and coma in some cases.

Law enforcement officers said the colorful packaging of Crazy Clown drug is targeting students, but according to a forensic scientist, it's what's inside the small, foil packet that could kill a child.

(Sources: www.psychologytoday.com; www.kctv5.com; www.nydailynews.com; www.ketv.com)

BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO TO SCHOOL!

School refusal behavior refers to a child-motivated refusal to attend school and/or difficulty remaining in classes for an entire day. The problem includes youth with lengthy absences from school, youth who skip classes during the day, youth who are chronically late to school, youth who show misbehaviors in the morning in an attempt to miss school, and youth who may attend school but do so with great dread and distress. Many youth demonstrate some aspect of school refusal behavior, making it one of the most common childhood behavior problems. It is estimated that anywhere from 5-28% of children will exhibit some form of school refusal. Untreated, a child with school refusal will likely fall behind academically and be at risk for long term mental health concerns. In addition, extended school refusal behavior can lead to serious short-term and long-term consequences; these consequences include academic problems, social alienation, family conflict and stress, school dropout, delinquency, and occupational and marital problems in adulthood.

Common symptoms of school refusal behavior include anxiety, depression, withdrawal, fatigue, crying, and physical complaints such as stomachaches and headaches. More disruptive symptoms may include tantrums, dawdling, noncompliance, arguing, refusal to move, running away from school or home, and aggression. Many children and adolescents with school refusal behavior show a wide range of constantly changing behaviors. Children with school-refusal behavior may have separation anxiety, a fear of being away from their parents, a social phobia, an inordinate fear of being judged, being called-on in class or being teased. A specific phobia — fear of riding the bus, walking past a dog or being out in a storm — may be present. Other children are depressed, in some cases unable to get out of bed. Many youth with school refusal complain of headaches, stomachaches or other physical symptoms, it can be difficult to tell whether anxiety, or a physical illness, is to blame. One indicator: anxiety-fueled ailments tend to disappear magically on weekends.

While the symptoms of school refusal behavior may be vast, the reasons can be categorized into four broad areas: (1) to avoid school-related situations that cause substantial distress, (2) to escape painful social and/or evaluative school-related situations, (3) to pursue attention from significant others, and (4) to pursue tangible rewards outside of school.

Students are at a heightened risk when starting a new school or transitioning to a new school such as middle or high school. Parents, educators and other caring, concerned adults should work to understand the reason behind the student's school refusal and seek treatment as necessary to ensure that the student does not academically suffer. Treatment that has been effective includes cognitive behavior therapy, exposure therapy, and relaxation techniques. In cognitive behavior therapy the student works with a professional to change the negative behaviors and thoughts that they have about school in general or a specific part of school. Exposure therapy is used when school refusal is driven by phobias. With exposure therapy a student gradually faces and masters his or her fears. With both cognitive behavior therapy and exposure therapy students are taught several relaxation techniques which include breathing exercises and visualization.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health the most important thing a parent can do is obtain a comprehensive mental health evaluation for their child. The evaluation will reveal reasons for the school refusal and help determine the best treatment options.

Professionals also state that it is important to keep children with school refusal in school. Missing school reinforces anxiety rather than alleviating it. The following tips will help children and families develop coping strategies for school anxieties and other stressful situations.

- Expose children to school in small degrees, increasing exposure slowly over time. Eventually this will help them realize there is nothing to fear and that nothing bad will happen.
- Talk with your child about feelings and fears, which helps reduce them.
- Emphasize the positive aspects of going to school: being with friends, learning a favorite subject, and playing at recess.
- Arrange an informal meeting with your child's teacher away from the classroom.
- Meet with the school guidance counselor for extra support and direction.
- Try self-help methods with your child. In addition to a therapist's recommendations, a good self-help book will provide relaxation techniques. Be open to new ideas so that your child is too.
- Encourage hobbies and interests. Fun is relaxation, and hobbies are good distractions that help build self-confidence.
- Help your child establish a support system. A variety of people should be in your child's life — other children as well as family members or teachers who are willing to talk with your child should the occasion arise.

(Sources: www.adaa.org; www.wjonline.com/refusal; www.aboutourkids.org/understandingschoolrefusal)