



# Poison HOTLINE

Partnership between Iowa Health System and  
University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics

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## Did you know .....

In 2009, the ISPC received a total of 43 calls regarding an exposure to the neon liquid from a glow product in the 7 days surrounding Halloween. The majority of cases involved a child biting into the product or the liquid splashing into an eye after the tube was punctured. Glow products contain dibutyl phthalate, which is an irritant to the mouth and eyes.

This Halloween, take care when handling a glow stick. Do not allow children to play with or to chew on glow products. If the liquid from the glow product gets into the mouth or eye, call the ISPC immediately at **1-800-222-1222** for treatment advice.

## Dextromethorphan

Dextromethorphan (DXM) is a cough suppressant found in many over-the-counter cough and cold medicines. DXM calls to the poison center frequently involve an accidental large ingestion of a cough/cold medicine by a young child or the intentional abuse of DXM by an adolescent or young adult. Common terms used with DXM abuse include Triple Cs, Robo tripping, and Skittling.



DXM is structurally similar to codeine, although it is not an opioid narcotic. It does not possess the analgesic or addictive properties of other opioids, but it may produce mild opioid effects in overdose. Other common effects seen in overdose include: dizziness, restlessness, nystagmus, ataxia, seizures, hallucinations, feelings of dissociation, and paranoia. DXM ingestions can lead to serotonin syndrome.

DXM overdose should be considered with ingestions of any over-the-counter cough and cold medicine. Because DXM is often combined with other ingredients (e.g: acetaminophen, antihistamines, alcohol), a mixed ingestion should always be suspected. Due to its structural similarity to phencyclidine, false positive drug screening for PCP may occur in patients with DXM ingestions.

Treatment for DXM overdoses consist of close monitoring of vital signs, as well as monitoring the respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological status of patients. Benzodiazepines should be used to treat seizures. Although naloxone (Narcan ®) has been reported to be effective in some overdose cases, in other cases no response was seen.

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**POISON  
Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**

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