

# USA NOTES

University/Schools Alliance—Partners in Prevention [www.udel.edu/usa](http://www.udel.edu/usa)

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## ***In Every Medicine Cabinet in the nation. . .***

Because this is winter, practically everyone's medicine cabinet contains some form of cough and cold medicine, either "just in case," or left-over from some previous illness. While parents have been warned to speak to their children about the risks of misusing or abusing prescription drugs, and especially prescription painkillers, little has been said about the misuse of over-the-counter medications. A study released January 10<sup>th</sup> from the 2006 National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) indicates that 4% of 12-17 year olds have used over-the-counter cough and cold medications to get high, 2% in the past year. Rates were higher among females than among males (2.3% in the past year versus 1.5%), and about three times higher for whites than blacks and Hispanics (2.1%, 0.6% and 1.4% respectively), and significantly higher for 18-25 year olds. Another national study, Monitoring the Future, found that 4% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 6% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders had gotten high on cough and cold medications.

## ***In Every Medicine Cabinet in Delaware . . .***

The Delaware School Survey asks public school students how often they use "over-the-counter drugs (cough & cold meds, Nyquil) to get high." While the wording strongly suggests cough and cold medications, positive responses could potentially include other products such as diet pills, allergy medications, energy boosters and sleep aids. In 2007, 7% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 8% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders responded they had gotten high on over-the-counter medications in the past year, down from 10% and 11% respectively in 2006. Males and females were equally likely to report use, as were black students and white students.

### **The Highs of Cough/Cold Medicine Abuse:**

- Mild distortions of color and sound
- Strong visual hallucinations
- "out-of-body" sensations
- Confusion, slurred speech
- Loss of motor control

### **The Lows of Cough/Cold Medicine Abuse:**

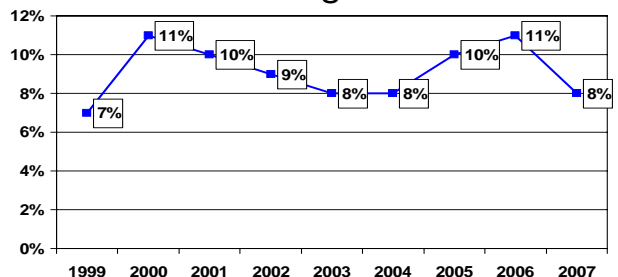
- Delusions
- Panic attacks
- Memory problems, blurred vision
- High blood pressure/rapid heart beat
- Stomach pain, vomiting
- Numbness of fingers and toes
- Dizziness, loss of consciousness

### **Terms for Cough/Cold Medicine Abuse:**

- Triple C or CCC (Coricidin Cough & Cold)
- Robo-fizzing (dissolving cough syrup in soda)
- Dex, DXM, Skittles, Syrup, Tussin



### **Delaware 11<sup>th</sup> Graders' Self-Reported Past Year Abuse of Over the Counter Drugs**

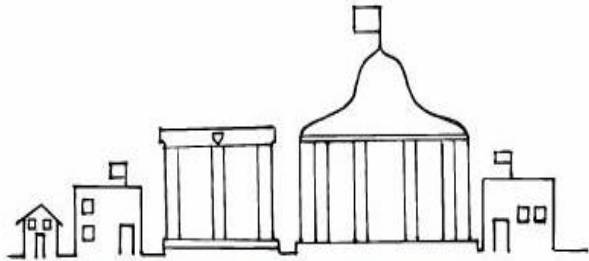


Source: Delaware School Survey, University of Delaware Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies

University/Schools Alliance thanks the Delaware Drug and Alcohol Tracking Alliance (DDATA) for data analyses and other information. Information concerning substance use in Delaware for youth and adults is available at: [www.udel.edu/delawaredata](http://www.udel.edu/delawaredata).

**University/Schools Alliance is a coalition of New Castle County public, private and Diocese high school and the University of Delaware working together to:**

- *Reduce substance use among Delaware secondary school students*
- *Create and support networks of students, parents, school and community sharing resources, strategies and support to sustain youth substance use reductions*



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- Registration by phone or online

#### UPCOMING EVENTS:

##### Coalition Meetings:

January 23, 2008 3:30 Location TBA

##### Parent Chats:

January 24, 2008 6:00 Padua Academy

“Navigating the Rites of Spring—Spring Break through Graduation Parties”

##### Other Trainings:

TBA

University/Schools Alliance is a federally funded Drug-Free Community (Office of National Drug Control Policy and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Data from the 2006 Delaware School Survey, University of Delaware, Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies