



Purple Drank: Information for Professionals

June 2021

What is Purple Drank?

Purple Drank also known as Barre, Sizzurp, Syrup, Lean is a drink made from cough syrup containing mostly codeine and promethazine. Dextromethorphan (DMX) is also found in some cough and cold medicines.

The syrup is mixed with a fizzy drink to cover up the taste and make a purple cocktail.

What are we worried about?

This is marketed to young people and may have harmful health effects.

This is likely to be used in a social environment with effects starting within 30-60 minutes, lasting for about six hours. Adding alcohol increases the risk of overdose and may result in poisoning.

Long term use of codeine may require increased amounts to get the same effect. Cravings may be experienced when someone stops taking it. They can get feelings of withdrawals such as cold sweats, sickness, throwing up and not being able to sleep.

Regular users of DXM also develop tolerance. Some users may have cravings and feelings of withdrawals. Longer term use can lead to psychosis and damage to thinking and memory skills.

Many over the counter medicines also contain paracetamol which can be very dangerous if you take too much. Overdose from paracetamol can cause permanent liver damage and can kill.

Displayed side effects may include

- Mild energy lift initially
- Mild hallucinations
- Dissociative
- Drowsy

What can you do?

Advise young people and their guardians about these risks.

Please be mindful of the medical needs should a child be present with symptoms, or if you suspect they have consumed a drug-infused substance. In a medical emergency call 999.

If you have any local information or intelligence please share it with: Crimestoppers, Fearless.org, Staffordshire Police 101, via facebook or the website.

Codeine is an opiate drug often taken for pain relief and it is also taken as a cough medicine and to stop diarrhoea. When you take codeine your body breaks it down into morphine, which is what gives it its pain-relieving effects and also what can possibly poison or kill you. Not everyone breaks down codeine to morphine at the same level so a dose that could be safe for one person could be very dangerous for someone else. It is a Class B drug and is normally only legally available on prescription, however some weaker codeine medicines are available from chemists without a prescription.



Dextromethorphan (DXM) is found in some cough and cold medicines. It is a dissociative drug, and when people take too much it can make them psychotic (when they're not sure what's real) and paranoid and they can trip out. DXM can make you sleepy, put you into a coma and you can even stop breathing. People can feel like they need more and more of it and some people can have withdrawal symptoms. It is available without prescription in over the counter products.

Promethazine was first prescribed to treat allergies but is now mostly used to help people sleep, or to stop them feeling or being sick. On its own it is a mild depressant, but at higher doses it has been linked to hallucinations. It is thought to make opioid drugs like codeine, morphine and heroin feel stronger.

Local support Services

Stoke on Trent Community Drug & Alcohol service (CDAS)
01782 221090
referrals@sotcdas.org.uk

T3 stars (Covering all areas of Staffordshire; Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stafford & Stone, Rugeley, Cannock & Burntwood, East Staffordshire & South Staffordshire) Excluding Stoke-on-Trent
Suite 1, 7-8 Mill Street, Stafford ST162AJ
01785 241393
t3stars.stafford@humankindcharity.org.uk

Websites:

The following websites are really helpful sources of information for children, young people and their guardians: Talk to FRANK – the government's drug advice website/helpline and their specific page on cannabis –
<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/cannabis>

For friendly, confidential advice, Talk to FRANK on 0300 1236600.

Referrals:

STAFFORDSHIRE REFERRALS:	STOKE-ON-TRENT REFERRALS:
<p>Staffordshire County Council's First Response Service: 0800 1313 126 (Monday-Thursday 8:30am - 5:00pm and Friday 08:30am - 4:30pm)</p> <p>If you have already made your enquiry by telephone please submit this MARF using the following link: https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Care-for-children-and-families/childprotection/First-Response.aspx Emergency Duty Service (Outside office hours): 0845 6042886</p>	<p>Childrens Advice and Duty Service (ChAD) 01782 235100 (Monday to Friday 8:30am - 6:00pm.) ChAD.referral@stoke.gov.uk Emergency duty team out of hours 01782 234234</p>
<p>* Please note that any information sharing needs to be in accordance with your agency's information governance processes. If you are unsure please check with your agency's designated safeguarding lead.</p>	