

Drug Early Warning System

Special Edition
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Working Together to Identify Emerging Drug Trends in Maryland

Distribution: 2,558

DEWS ALERT Oxycodone (Percodan, Percocet)

In February 2000, the Steering Committee of the DEWS Action Team began tracking a possible increase in the use of oxycodone by Maryland residents. Six counties and Baltimore City report abuse of the drug.

*If you have any information about the use of this drug, please call the DEWS toll-free tip line,
1-877-234-DEWS.*

What is oxycodone? Oxycodone is a semi-synthetic opiate. It is chemically different from heroin and opium only in structure and the duration of the effects. It is legally marketed in combination with aspirin (Percodan) or acetaminophen (Percocet) as a medium strength pain-killer. Oxycodone is a schedule II controlled substance on the federal level and in Maryland.

How is oxycodone used? Oxycodone is sold in pill form and can be taken orally or dissolved in water and injected.

Who is using oxycodone? Although oxycodone is used by a wide variety of people, reports from Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Harford County indicate that it has a growing reputation among teens. Oxycodone can be purchased on the street, according to contacts in Cecil and Harford counties or through virtual pharmacies on the internet. The DEA reports that nearly 85% (25 of 30) of arrests for false prescriptions in Maryland involved oxycodone. Adults in treatment in Carroll County have begun to mention it as a tertiary substance of abuse, suggesting that it may be used as a substitute when other drugs, such as heroin, are unavailable. In Wicomico County, oxycodone is used by adults who obtain it from family members who have legitimate prescriptions. Users have also been known to visit doctors with phony symptoms to get prescriptions.

What are the effects of oxycodone use? This drug has a high potential for physical and psychological dependence. Effects of a normal dose of oxycodone can include euphoria, drowsiness, respiratory depression, and nausea. Overdoses can cause slow and shallow breathing, clammy skin, convulsions, coma, and death. Withdrawal symptoms may include watery eyes, runny nose, yawning, loss of appetite, irritability, tremors, cramps, panic, nausea, and chills and sweating.

What are the street names for oxycodone? Oxicotten, oxycet, and oxy 80's are all street names for oxycodone.

SOURCES: For additional information, please contact Erin Artigiani at 301-403-8329. A complete list of sources is available on the DEWS website (www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm).

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