

# Narcotic Educational Foundation of America

Drug Abuse Education Provider of the:  
California Narcotic Officers' Association

## NARCOTIC ANALGESICS

### QUICK FACTS:

Narcotic [Analgesics](#), (Opioids) are a class of drugs used to relieve pain. They are among the world's oldest known [drugs](#), use of the [opium poppy](#) for its therapeutic benefits predates recorded history. The [analgesic](#) (painkiller) effects of opioids are due to decreased perception of pain, decreased reaction to pain as well as increased pain tolerance. The side effects of opioids include [sedation](#), [respiratory depression](#), [constipation](#), and a strong sense of [euphoria](#). Opioids can cause cough suppression, which can be both an indication for opioid administration or an unintended side effect. [Opioid dependence](#) can develop with ongoing administration, leading to a [withdrawal syndrome](#) with abrupt discontinuation. Opioids are well known for their ability to produce a feeling of euphoria, motivating some to [recreationally use](#) opioids.

### Oxycodone / OxyContin

Are [opioid analgesic medication](#) synthesized from opium-derived [thebaine](#). It was developed in 1916 in Germany, as one of several new [semi-synthetic](#) opioids in an attempt to improve on the existing opioids: [morphine](#), [diacetylmorphine](#) (heroin), and [codeine](#).

Oxycodone oral medications are generally prescribed for the relief of moderate to severe pain. Currently it is formulated as single ingredient products or compounded products. Some common examples of compounding are oxycodone with acetaminophen/paracetamol or [ibuprofen](#). OxyContin is [Purdue Pharma's](#) brand for [time-release](#) oral oxycodone

The effects, addiction, and chemical composition of oxycodone are extremely similar to heroin, oxycodone abuse often lacks the strong taboos and negative reputation of heroin. Heroin's reputation has been developed over years of observing the detrimental effects on heroin abusers' lives. Lacking the reputation of heroin, many youths and novice drug users engage in oxycodone abuse without understanding the consequences associated with its abuse, such as a heroin-like addiction potential and the threat of a fatal overdose. The appeal to youth and novice drug users is principally due to its ease of use (oral, intranasal) and its availability. Also, pharmaceutical drugs like oxycodone have a definite purity and known ingredients, unlike street-drugs like heroin, which have relatively unknown purity and ingredients.

### Symptoms/Side-Effects:

#### Common side effects and adverse reactions:

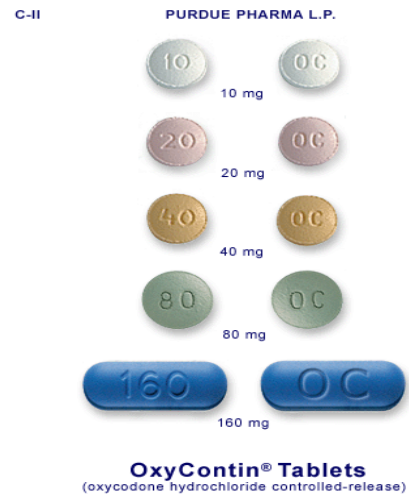
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Dry mouth
- Miosis (contraction of the pupil)
- Orthostatic hypotension (blood pressure lowers upon sudden standing)
- Urinary retention / constipation

#### Less common side effects and adverse reactions:

- Confusion
- Hallucinations
- Delirium
- Hives
- Itch
- Hypothermia
- Bradycardia (slow heart rate)
- Tachycardia (rapid heart rate)
- Raised intracranial pressure
- Ureteric or biliary spasm
- Muscle rigidity
- Flushing

#### Most severe side effects and adverse reactions:

- Respiratory depression and fatal overdose



A trend in teens and people in their early 20s taking Oxycontin pills (top) and smoking them to bypass a built-in time-release function. Pills are smoked on aluminum foil, leaving tell-tale black streaks.



## PURPLE DRANK

Purple drank is a [slang](#) term for a [recreational drug](#) popular in the [hip hop](#) community in the [southern United States](#), originating in [Houston, Texas](#). Its main ingredient is [prescription-strength cough syrup](#) containing [codeine](#) and [promethazine](#). Cough syrup is typically mixed with ingredients such as [Sprite](#) soft drink or Mountain Dew and pieces of [Jolly Rancher](#) candy. The purplish hue of purple drank comes from [dyes](#) in the cough syrup.

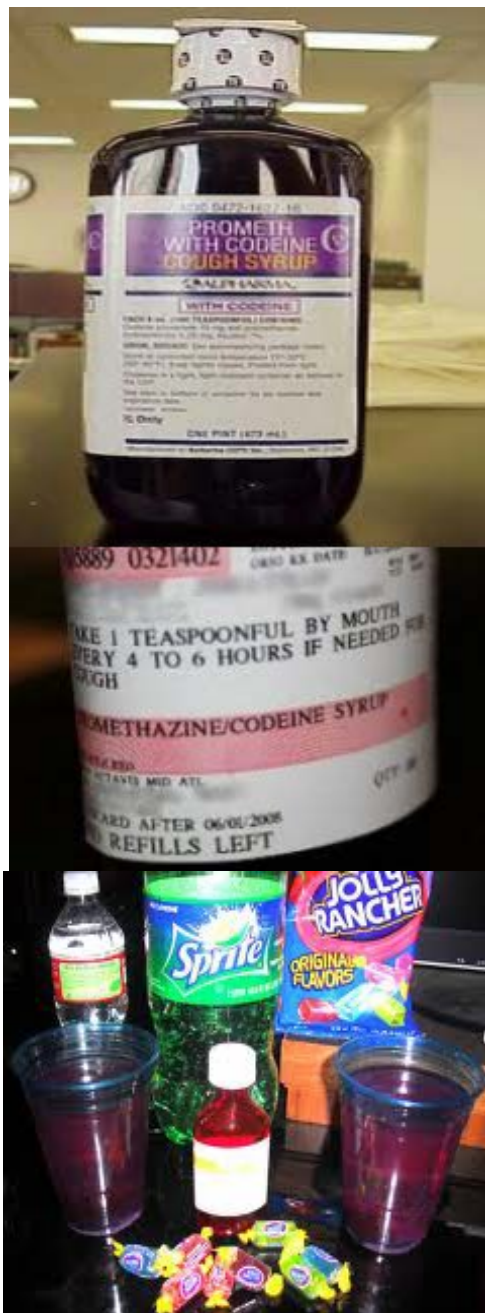
The most popular type of codeine syrup is [promethazine-codeine](#), a prescription cough syrup. The active ingredients are [codeine](#), a [narcotic](#), and the [antihistamine](#) medication [promethazine](#). When taken in large quantities, both medications can lead to [sedation](#) and altered levels of consciousness. The addition of these antihistamines is intended to deter abuse at high doses (in doses higher than recommended, effects produce extreme somnolence, weakness and may even cause fatal respiratory depression). In lower doses, these potentiate the opiates.

Prescription cough syrups containing [hydrocodone](#) are also used to make the drink, though they are less popular. Promethazine-codeine contains 10 mg of codeine and 6.25 mg of promethazine per 5 mL. Some users report that the large amount of sugar in drank causes them to experience [weight gain](#), [tooth decay](#), and other medical symptoms.

Purple drank is confirmed or suspected to have caused the deaths of several prominent users. Respiratory depression is a potentially serious or fatal adverse drug reaction associated with the use of [codeine](#), but mainly the danger lies in the much more potent and [CNS-depressing](#) phenothiazine-related antihistamine promethazine. This depression is dose-related and is the mechanism for the potentially fatal consequences of overdose: [respiratory](#) or [cardiac arrest](#). As with most CNS depressants, mixing with alcohol greatly increases the risk of respiratory failure and other complications.

## SLANG TERMS FOR PURPLE DRANK

- ◆ Sizzurp
- ◆ Lean
- ◆ Syrup
- ◆ Drank
- ◆ Barre
- ◆ Purple jelly
- ◆ Texas tea



## BURPRENORPHINE

Buprenorphine is a [thebaine](#) derivative with powerful analgesia approximately 20-40x more potent than morphine and its [analgesic](#) effect is due to partial agonist activity at [opioid receptors](#). Buprenorphine also has very high [binding affinity](#) for the such that [opioid receptor](#) antagonists (naloxone) only partially reverse its effects. These two [properties](#) must be carefully considered by the [practitioner](#), as an [overdose](#) cannot be easily reversed. Overdose is unlikely in addicted patients or people with tolerance to opioids who use the drug sublingually as meant in the case of Subutex/Suboxone, especially if there is no alcohol involved. Simultaneous use of alcohol with any opioid increases the risk of overdose.

Buprenorphine is also used recreationally, typically by opioid users, often by [insufflation](#). Recreational users of Suboxone who crush the tablet and snort it report a euphoric rush similar to other opioids in addition to a slight "upper"-like effect. Those already using buprenorphine/Suboxone for opioid addiction therapy find that insufflation is only slightly, if any stronger than taking the pill sublingually, although it may have a quicker onset. Those taking it for addiction therapy also report that obtaining euphoria is virtually impossible after the first few doses. Many recreational users also report withdrawal symptoms. Due to the high potency of tablet forms of buprenorphine, only a small amount of the drug need be ingested to achieve the desired effects. Although some people do use buprenorphine for purely recreational reasons, the majority of its illicit users use it for addiction therapy. Many people report it being effective in preventing withdrawals in-between doses of their opiate of choice. Illicit users who do not want it on record may also obtain it on the street to use as a less-painful method of quitting other than "cold-turkey".

