

ALERT

‘Purple Drank’ and young people

06/02/18

Reports of the use of ‘PURPLE DRANK’ (also known as ‘LEAN’ or ‘SIZZURP’) by young people

Information has been received from our Addaction service in Exeter that young people in the Honiton area are using ‘purple drank’. ‘Purple drank’ may also be known as ‘LEAN’ or Sizzurp’

What is ‘Purple Drank’?

This is a term used for a recreational drink that combines the following:

- Liquid medications that can be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy (or via prescription and online) that contain codeine, promethazine or dextromethorphan. These may be purchased as individual medicines and mixed together.
- Soft drinks
- Fruit-flavoured sweets to improve taste

Codeine linctus is an opiate that can be purchased from pharmacies for the relief of dry irritating coughs.

Promethazine is a sedating antihistamine that can be purchased for short term insomnia, allergic reactions and travel sickness.

Dextromethorphan is a cough suppressant that can be purchased for dry tickly coughs.

When these medicines are mixed together to create ‘purple drank’ users can easily lose track of how much of the active drug they have consumed as the liquid is masked by pleasant or familiar flavours from soft drinks.

What are the effects of taking 'purple drank'?

These will vary depending on the contents of the drink. However users have reported euphoric and dissociative effects.

Other effects may include: constricted pupils, slow or slurred speech, uncontrolled eye movement, droopy eyes, slowed heart rate, drowsiness, loss of balance, loss of coordination and paleness.

The ability to drive may also be impaired, and young people have complained of 'memory problems' after taking the drink.

There is a risk of overdose particularly due to the use of codeine, which may be increased when taken in combination with alcohol.

Advice

This alert is to raise awareness amongst Addaction staff for the potential of young people to report use of Purple Drank or other mixtures.

Harm reduction advice should be offered including:

- Risk of overdose which may be increased if taken with alcohol
- To use this with other people and never alone
- Reinforce that whilst these medicines can be legally sought when taken above the recommended doses the effects may be very damaging
- Ensure that users are aware of the dangers of driving whilst under the influence of these concoctions.