

DrugWipe® drug screening – reliable detection of codeine

NEWSLETTER

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From the rap scene to everyday life

Codeine, the latest drug trend, is currently experiencing a surge in popularity. The opiate is blatantly glorified on the rap scene. Its euphoric and subsequent sedative effects are lauded, while the high risk of addiction and its potential to cause inestimable damage are rarely mentioned.

You might be forgiven for mistaking terms like “dirty sprite” or “Texas tea” for the names of refreshing soft drinks for summer. In fact, they describe a highly potent cocktail of prescription medication – usually cough syrup – containing codeine, mixed with a carbonated soft drink and often garnished with ground-up sweets for extra flavour. This mixture – also known as “lean”, “purple drank”, “sizzurp” or “syrup” – is rising in popularity. It triggers a feeling of euphoria, followed by a pleasant sense of lethargy and dissociation from the body. The effects develop after 20 to 60 minutes and last from 6 to 8 hours. In rare cases, codeine may also



Codeine, as an opiate, can be reliably detected with the DrugWipe opiate test line.

Legal cough syrup or illicit drug?

In Germany, possession of codeine without a licence or a special narcotic prescription is liable to prosecution under the Narcotics Act.

Medications that contain only small quantities of codeine as their active ingredient are exempt from narcotics legislation. Most of these are cough suppressants and painkillers and are available on a standard prescription. However, doctors must use a dedicated narcotic prescription when prescribing these to a patient with a drug or alcohol dependency.

Codeine is controlled differently in different countries across the world. In some, it is available without restriction. In others, registration at the time of purchase or a prescription is required. And, in yet others, it is a fully controlled substance, even when used in medication.

be abused in suppository form. The risk of addiction is very high.

Both the euphoric phase and the subsequent lethargy experienced harbour high risks if users engage in activities such as driving or operating machinery. If they cause an accident or are found to be driving dangerously, criminal proceedings will be instituted.



Reliable detection with the DrugWipe drug test

Codeine, as member of the opiate family, can be reliably detected with the DrugWipe opiate test line. Even low quantities can be detected using the saliva test and the surface and wipe test. This means that a fast and simple detection method is available for roadside screening and for workplace testing of suspicious cases.

Opiate or opium – what’s what?

The terms “opiate” and “opioid” are often used synonymously. However, opiates in the strict sense of the word only include alkaloids derived from opium – especially morphine. Opioids, on the other hand, also include synthetic substances that produce effects similar to those of morphine. Many of these substances are very strong painkillers or anaesthetics with a particularly high potential to cause addiction.

Natural opiates are derived from the milky sap of the opium poppy. This sap is raw opium, which contains morphine. Depending on the region in which the plant is grown, the morphine concentration ranges from 2 to 26 percent. It is now known that these poppies contain more than 20 other substances in addition to morphine. As well as codeine, these include thebaine, papaverine, narcotine, narceine, noscapine and xanthaline (papaveraldine).

Synthetic and semi-synthetic opioids produce effects similar to morphine. Heroin is a semi-synthetic opioid, while fentanyl and methadone are fully synthetic opioids. Endorphins are opioids produced by the body. One of their functions is to regulate feeling such as pain and hunger.

Access to codeine is readily available to those who seek it. Online pharmacies based in other countries offer medication containing codeine without a prescription and obliging sellers are always to be found on Instagram.

The dosage is 20 mg up to a maximum of 200 mg. Higher doses do not increase the rush that is experienced, but do raise the risk of side-effects. This is because the quantity consumed presents one of the greatest risks associated with codeine consumption. Some people experience a high with just a small dose, while others experience no effects even at high doses. Because the effects are so unique to each person, determining which dose to take is like playing Russian roulette.

Another risk factor is the form in which it is consumed. Mixing the drug with a sugary drink makes it seem harmless, which in turn leads to excessive consumption. Codeine has a dulling effect on the central nervous system and, in the event of an overdose, respiratory arrest may occur.

The third risk is due to the fact that codeine is frequently abused in combination with other drugs, alcohol or medication. Depressants such as alcohol increase the risk of respiratory arrest. Due to the powerful effect of codeine on the nervous system, it is impossible to predict all possible interactions it may have with other substances.

The physical effects of withdrawal from codeine can be the same as those that occur when quitting heroin. The withdrawal period may also be relatively long.

Please contact us for advice on opiate detection with DrugWipe.

Securetec Detektions-Systeme AG

Lilienthalstraße 7
85579 Neubiberg

Germany

P +49 89 203080-1651

F +49 89 203080-1652

info@securetec.net

www.securetec.net

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