What is in this leaflet

The medicine you have purchased contains dextromethorphan.

This leaflet is intended to provide information on the active ingredient dextromethorphan, which is contained in many different medicines. The packaging of the medicine you have bought should be read carefully. This leaflet provides additional information on dextromethorphan.

Please follow the instructions on the packaging of the medicine you purchased and in this leaflet before you start using dextromethorphan.

This leaflet answers some common questions about dextromethorphan. It does not contain all the available information. It does not take the place of talking to your doctor or pharmacist.

All medicines have risks and benefits.

If you have any concerns about using this medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Keep this leaflet with the medicine. You may need to read it again.

What dextromethorphan is used for

Dextromethorphan is a cough suppressant that acts on the cough centre in the brain to suppress a dry cough.

There may be more than one active ingredient in your medicine, such as paracetamol, ibuprofen, a nasal decongestant or an antihistamine. If you are taking more than one cough and cold medicine, please read the packaging on all the cough and cold medicine carefully to ensure you are not taking the same active ingredient from 2 or more medicines. Taking the same active ingredient from more than one medicine could mean you are taking too much of that active ingredient.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about dextromethorphan.

Before you use dextromethorphan
Do not use dextromethorphan:
- if you have severe liver disease.
- if you are taking a medicine known as a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) or have taken one in the last 14 days.
- if you are taking medicines for depression.
- in a child under 6 years of age.
- if you are allergic to dextromethorphan or any of the other ingredients listed on the packaging of the medicine you have bought.

Some of the symptoms of an allergic reaction may include:
- shortness of breath.
- wheezing or difficulty breathing.
- swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body.
- rash, itching or hives on the skin.

Do not take this medicine if you are having an asthma attack.

Do not take this medicine after the expiry date printed on the pack or if the packaging is torn or shows signs of tampering.
If it has expired or is damaged, return it to your pharmacist for disposal.

If you are not sure whether you should start using dextromethorphan, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

**Before you start to use it**

Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you have allergies to any medicines, foods, preservatives or dyes.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking dextromethorphan if you have or have had any of the following medicine conditions:
- asthma.
- chronic obstructive airways disease (COPD).
- pneumonia.
- any other respiratory (breathing) conditions.
- liver problems.

Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you have a chronic cough i.e. a cough that has lasted a long time.
Dextromethorphan may make your cough worse.

Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you have a condition that produces large amounts of mucus.
Dextromethorphan may make your condition worse.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant.
Your pharmacist or doctor will discuss the benefits and possible risks of taking dextromethorphan during pregnancy.
Ask your pharmacist or doctor about taking dextromethorphan if you are breastfeeding.

It is not known if dextromethorphan passes into the breast milk. Your pharmacist or doctor will discuss the potential benefits and risks of taking dextromethorphan if you are breastfeeding.

Do not use dextromethorphan in children under 6 years of age. Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using in children aged 6-12 years.

If you have not told your pharmacist or doctor about any of the above, tell him/her before you start taking dextromethorphan.

**Taking other medicines**

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines, including any that you get without a prescription from you pharmacy, supermarket of health food shop.

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other cough and cold medicines.

You should also tell any health professional who is prescribing a new medication for you that you are taking dextromethorphan.

Some medicines and dextromethorphan may interfere with each other. These include:-

- medicines used to treat depression.
- monoamine oxidase inhibitors (used to treat depression or Parkinson’s disease), especially if taken within the last 14 days. These include moclobemide, phenelzine and tranylcypromine.
- quinidine and amiodarone, medicines used to treat abnormal or irregular heart beat.
- strong pain killers (opioid analgesics).
- medicines used to help you relax, sleep or relieve anxiety, such as sedatives.
- alcohol.

These medicines may be affected by dextromethorphan or may affect how well it works. You may need different amounts of your medicine or you may need to take different medicines.

Your doctor or pharmacist will have more information on medicines to be careful with or avoid while taking dextromethorphan.

**How to use dextromethorphan**

Follow any directions given to you by your pharmacist or doctor carefully. They may differ from the information contained in this leaflet.
Read the packaging and this leaflet carefully before taking dextromethorphan. If you do not understand the instructions on the packaging, ask your pharmacist for help.

**How much to take**

*Follow the instructions on the packaging of the product you have purchased.*
You may also wish to discuss how much to take and when to take it with your pharmacist or doctor.

*Do not take more than the recommended dose.*
The maximum recommended daily dose of dextromethorphan is 120 mg.

If the symptoms persist for more than a few days, or worsen, consult your doctor or pharmacist.

**If you forget to take it**

Take it as soon as you remember, and then go back to taking your medicine as you would normally.

*Do not take a double dose to make up for the dose that you missed.*
This may increase the chance of you getting an unwanted side effect.

If you are not sure what to do, ask your pharmacist or doctor.

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**While you are using dextromethorphan**

**Things you must do**

*Talk to your pharmacist or doctor if your symptoms do not improve.*
Your pharmacist or doctor will assess your condition and decide if you should continue to take the medicine.

If you are about to be started on any new medicine tell your doctor or pharmacist that you are taking dextromethorphan.

**Things you must not do**

Do not give dextromethorphan to anyone else, even if they have the same condition as you.

Do not take dextromethorphan to treat any other complaints unless your pharmacist or doctor tells you to.

Do not take more than the recommended dose unless your doctor tells you to.
**Things to be careful of**

Be careful driving or operating machinery until you know how dextromethorphan affects you. Dextromethorphan may cause dizziness in some people. If this happens, do not drive or operate machinery.

**In case of overdose**

**If you take too much**

Immediately telephone your doctor or the National Poisons Information Centre (telephone 0800 POISON or 0800 764 766) for advice, or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency Centre, if you think you or anyone else may have taken too much dextromethorphan. Do this even if there are no signs of discomfort or poisoning. You may need medical attention.

Keep telephone numbers for these places handy.

If you are not sure what to do, contact your pharmacist or doctor.

**Side Effects**

Tell your doctor or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well while you are using dextromethorphan.

Dextromethorphan helps most people with a dry cough, but it may have unwanted side effects in a few people. All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical treatment if you get some of the side effects.

Do not be alarmed by the following list of side effects. You may not experience any of them.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions or concerns.

If you experience any of the following stop using the medicine and seek immediate medical help:

- excitation
- extreme confusion
- nervousness or anxiety
- irritability
- restlessness
• severe nausea and/or vomiting
• shortness of breath, wheezing or difficulty in breathing
• swelling of the face, lips, tongue or other parts of the body (these are signs of a severe allergic reaction)
• skin rashes
• muscle spasms affecting the eyes, head, neck and body.

The list above includes very serious side effects. You may need urgent medical attention or hospitalisation. These side effects are very rare. They usually only happen if an overdose of dextromethorphan has been taken.

Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you notice any of the following and they worry you:
• mild drowsiness
• dizziness
• fatigue
• nausea or vomiting
• stomach discomfort
• constipation

The above list includes the more common side effects of dextromethorphan. They are usually mild.

Tell your pharmacist or doctor if you notice anything that is making you feel unwell. Other adverse effects not listed above may also occur in some people.

**After using dextromethorphan**

**Storage**

Keep your medicine in the original pack until it is time to take it.

Keep your medicine in a cool, dry place. Do not store above the temperature shown on the packaging.

Do not store any medicine in the bathroom or near a sink. Do not leave it on a window sill or in the car. Heat and dampness can destroy some medicines.

Keep it out of sight and where children cannot reach it. A locked cupboard at least one-and-a-half metres above the ground is a good place to store medicines.

**Disposal**
Ask your pharmacist what to do with any medicine that is left over, or if the expiry date has passed.

**Product description**

Dextromethorphan is available in a number of medicines used to treat coughs, colds and influenza. It may be contained in tablets, capsules, lozenges or liquids. Always read the packaging of the medicine you have purchased carefully to see which ingredients it contains.

**Date of Preparation**

This leaflet was prepared on 4 November 2010.

This leaflet was prepared under the guidance of the New Zealand Self-Medication Industry (NZSMI):

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Should you have any questions regarding the product you have purchased, please contact your doctor, pharmacist of the manufacturer (contact details should be provided on the packaging of the medicine you have purchased).