Get Control Before Stress Takes Its Toll

Before recovery, you may have wanted to drink or use drugs when you felt stressed out. For many, substance abuse is a common response to chronic stress however it is not a helpful remedy—it actually aggravates stress. With April being National Stress Awareness Month, let’s take a closer look at how stress can affect your body, mood and behavior and healthy ways to relieve stress.

Most people need a certain amount of stress. In the right amount, it can give you an edge. Keep you sharp and alert. On the other hand, living in a constant state of stress isn’t a good idea. Constant stress produces high levels of cortisol, a hormone released from the adrenal gland in times of stress, which has been shown to impair cognitive functioning and weaken the immune system.

Without a doubt, stress symptoms can affect your body, your thoughts and feelings as well as your behavior. Being able to recognize common stress symptoms can give you a jump on managing them.

continued inside
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The ideal is to have just enough stress to remain focused; but to also have an outlet that can regulate stress and keep it from overtaking your life. Following are a few healthy ways to help you defuse stress.

Relax
Take short meditation and mindfulness breaks.

Go Outside
If you have one, play with your pet, or go outside for a quick 5-minute break.

Sleep
Don’t skimp on sleep. Try and get a good 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night.

Find more information and helpful tips on stress reduction online at RecoverGateway.org/Stress

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF STRESS...

...ON YOUR BODY
• Headache
• Muscle tension or pain
• Chest pain
• Fatigue
• Change in sex drive
• Stomach upset
• Sleep problems

...ON YOUR MOOD
• Anxiety
• Restlessness
• Lack of motivation or focus
• Irritability or anger
• Sadness or depression

...ON YOUR BEHAVIOR
• Overeating or under eating
• Angry outbursts
• Drug or alcohol abuse
• Tobacco use
• Social withdrawal

Source: American Psychological Association’s “Stress in America” report, 2010

10 Ways to Give Back and Help Others

Top 10 Easy and Fulfilling Ways to Volunteer:

1. Speak at a graduation ceremony.
2. Share your story with clients and encourage them to be involved in Alumni program.
3. Coordinate a holiday dinner.
4. Run support groups.
5. Help with set-up, decorating and cleanup for Alumni special events.
6. Ask local businesses if they are willing to donate goods or services for Alumni events or prizes for fund-raising activities.
7. Share with Alumni Coordinators creative Alumni event ideas that would be fun and supportive of Alumni in recovery.
8. Hand out flyers about upcoming Alumni events at the local AA/NA meetings.
9. Promote Alumni events at the local recovery homes.
10. Come to Gateway on a day other than an Alumni meeting day to sit with a few clients to discuss their Relapse Prevention Plans.

To take advantage of opportunities to support others in recovery please contact any Gateway Foundation Alumni Coordinator. Contact information located on back page in the Alumni Group Meeting Schedule.

If you know a family member or friend struggling with alcohol or drug abuse, Gateway Foundation can help.

24-Hour Helpline
877-505-HOPE (4673)
RecoverGateway.org
Alumni Question:
How can you help someone who is abusing Robitussin DM in liquid and pill forms?

Answer:
Abuse of Robitussin DM is not rare, especially among teenagers but also some younger adults. It's sometimes called "Robo-tripping." The “D” in the “DM” refers to dextromethorphan (a cough suppressant), and that’s what causes the “high.” Robitussin DM is available over-the-counter and it’s not very expensive. That, along with the effects users seek, make this a high potential drug for abuse.

The effects of Robitussin DM vary a little from person to person, but commonly they include altered time perception and visual hallucinations. Signs of abuse include: anxiety, excitability, slurred speech, sweating and obvious altered perception of reality in speech content and response. For some, the effects can include relaxation or drowsiness.

Finally, as to your question, what can be done to help someone stop abusing Robitussin DM? This will depend on the person. Since the drug is over-the-counter, some mistakenly believe that it is harmless. Some individuals, when they learn the risks, are motivated to stop using it. For others, even ones who are motivated to stop, actually quitting can be a struggle.

There can be serious side effects when one uses more than the suggested amount and even for some who use the suggested amount of Robitussin DM. These side effects can include: difficulty breathing, allergic reactions (sometimes with swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat), dizziness (which can be severe), anxiety/restlessness, confusion and shallow breathing.

If the person has been using high doses fairly regularly, there can be withdrawal symptoms, much like from narcotic drugs, and these can include: restlessness, insomnia, muscle and bone aches, diarrhea and vomiting. If the person’s addiction is severe, then the withdrawal process may need to be medically monitored as, in some cases, it can be life threatening.

From your question, I don’t know the extent of this person’s Robitussin DM use pattern: how much, how frequently and how long? If learning the risks isn’t enough to cease abuse, I recommend that you encourage him/her to be evaluated as to the most effective kind of treatment, such as outpatient, residential substance abuse treatment or hospitalization with medical monitoring.

This person can get a free and confidential assessment at a Gateway Foundation treatment center by calling us at 877-505-4673. Thanks for your question and your concern for this individual.
## Alumni Group Meeting Schedule

Maintain your connection with Gateway Foundation, other Alumni and the recovery community through upcoming fellowship events.

### Aurora
- **Location:** 400 Mercy Lane, 630-966-7400
- **Contact:** Pamela Gomez Scott
- **Adults - 2nd Tuesday:** 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
- **4th Thursday:** 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
- **1st Friday:** Alumni Café (w/Open Mic) 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

### Carbondale
- **Location:** 1080 E. Park St., 618-529-1151
- **Contact:** Andy Greer
- **3rd Monday:** 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

### Caseyville/Belleville
- **Location:** 600 W. Lincoln St., 618-345-3970
- **Contact:** Jason Ford
- **Adults - 3rd Thursday:** 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

### Chicago Northwest
- **Location:** 4301 W. Grand, 773-862-2279
- **Contact:** James Medrano
- **3rd Friday:** 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

### Chicago West
- **Location:** 3828 W. Taylor St., 773-826-1916
- **Contact:** Gabriela Raijer
- **Adults - 3rd Saturday:** 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- **Teens - 2nd Thursday:** 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

### Lake Villa
- **Location:** 25480 W. Cedarcrest Ln., 847-356-8205
- **Adults and Young Men - 3rd Friday:** 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- **Teens - 3rd Wednesday:** 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

### Springfield
- **Location:** 2200 Lake Victoria Dr., 217-529-9266
- **Contact:** Mercedes Kent
- **Adults - 3rd Wednesday:** 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- **Teens - 3rd Wednesday:** 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

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**For more information or to RSVP for an Alumni event, please call the contact listed for each event.**

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### NORTHERN ILLINOIS

#### Memorial Day Day Party
- **Date:** Saturday, May 25, 5–7 p.m. (Adults 18+)
- **Location:** Gateway Foundation Chicago West
- **Address:** 3828 W. Taylor St., Chicago, IL 60624
- **RSVP:** By 5/21/13 to Gabriela Raijer at 773-826-1916 ext. 2850

#### Summer Solstice Picnic
- **Date:** Thursday, June 13, 6–8:30 p.m.
- **Location:** Gateway Foundation Aurora
- **Address:** 400 Mercy Lane, Aurora, IL 60506
- **RSVP:** By 6/7/13 to Pamela Gomez-Scott at 630-966-7436

#### Barbeque Picnic
- **Date:** Saturday, June 15, 1–5 p.m. (Youth)
- **Location:** Gateway Foundation Lake Villa on Back 40
- **Address:** 25480 W. Cedarcrest Lane, Lake Villa, IL 60046
- **RSVP:** By 6/11/13 to Bennie Haywood at 847-356-8205 ext. 3201

### CENTRAL ILLINOIS

#### Graduation Party
- **Date:** Wednesday, May 15, 7–8:30 p.m.
- **Location:** Gateway Foundation Springfield
- **Address:** 2200 Lake Victoria Dr., Springfield, IL 62703
- **RSVP:** By 5/10/13 to Mercedes Kent at 217-529-9266 ext. 2625

#### Summer Cookout
- **Date:** Saturday, June 22, 12–4 p.m.
- **Location:** Gateway Foundation Springfield
- **Address:** 2200 Lake Victoria Dr., Springfield, IL 62703
- **RSVP:** By 6/19/13 to Mercedes Kent at 217-529-9266 ext. 2625

### SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

#### Bowling Outing
- **Date:** Wednesday, April 17, 6–8 p.m.
- **Location:** Gateway Foundation Belleville & Caseyville
- **Address:** 40 W. Reynolds St., Caseyville, IL 62232
- **RSVP:** By 4/12/13 to Jason Ford at 618-345-3970 ext. 3416

#### Mexican Dinner
- **Date:** Thursday, May 16, 6–8 p.m.
- **Location:** Gateway Foundation Belleville & Caseyville
- **Address:** 40 W. Reynolds St., Caseyville, IL 62232
- **RSVP:** By 5/10/13 to Jason Ford at 618-345-3970 ext. 3416

#### Recovery Fun in the Sun Picnic
- **Date:** Monday, June 17, 6 – 8 p.m.
- **Location:** Gateway Foundation Carbondale
- **Address:** 1080 E. Park St., Carbondale, IL 62901
- **RSVP:** By 6/12/13 to Andy Greer at 618-529-1151 ext. 2937

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Please note that dates and times may change periodically. It is recommended that you call to confirm the meeting time and date.