

## PURPLE DRANK - DEADLY DRINK

If you are a rap or hip-hop fan, chances are you have heard references to “sizzurp,” “lean,” “purple sprite,” and “purple drank” in songs by prominent artists. The rapper Lil’ Wayne frequently appears in music videos holding a Styrofoam cup, singing about the effects of what is inside it. What is this drink that is so popular among rappers? It’s nothing more than prescription drug abuse, and even as musicians irresponsibly promote it with their lyrics, it has killed at least three members of their own profession. While rappers send many wrong messages to young people with their lyrics, perhaps none of them is more dangerous than encouraging the drinking of Purple Drank.

## WHAT IS PURPLE DRANK?

Purple Drank is a beverage, mostly consisting of Sprite or Mountain Dew and fruit candy. This combination gives the drink an extremely high sugar content, which is quite unhealthy in itself. The deadly ingredient, however, is cough syrup containing

**codeine** and **promethazine**. In order to avoid the consequences of illegally obtaining prescription cough syrup, some people have tried to substitute over-the-counter versions instead. However, these versions have added components that negate the tripping effects of promethazine, so they do not affect the mind as much. “Real” Purple Drank contains unfiltered codeine and promethazine, both powerful drugs that have the potential to kill.

## “TEXAS TEA” FROM THE CITY OF SYRUP

Rappers and drug users call Houston, Texas the “City of Syrup.” Shortly before the year 2000, purple drank was developed by users in Houston and quickly spread throughout the southeastern U.S. One rapper in particular, DJ Screw, became addicted and claimed that the drink was the inspiration for his music and lyrics. DJ Screw’s friend Big Moe popularized it even more, basing two of his albums on its appearance and effects. Today, even some of the best-known rappers (Ludacris, Eminem, Lil’ Wayne, and Kanye West, for example) make no secret of their fondness for Purple Drank.



**Someone who is high on drank has no inhibitions about walking into traffic, injuring himself, or trying to drive a vehicle.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Go to [www.intheknowzone.com](http://www.intheknowzone.com) for more information on substance abuse. Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links. Test your understanding with a quick quiz.

**Don’t stay in the dark.  
Get In the Know!**

**in the know**

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P.O. Box 6986 Metairie, LA 70009 • 877-329-0578  
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**PURPLE DRANK**  
*addiction in a cup*





WHAT DOES IT DO?

When someone drinks Purple Drank, several things are “supposed” to happen. Codeine, a narcotic, slows the brain’s normal functioning and triggers an alteration of consciousness. Promethazine, if it is present in small amounts, intensifies the codeine’s effect. Even this intended effect is extremely hazardous to the user, since it disconnects him from reality and leaves him vulnerable to any and every danger that might come his way. Someone who is high on Drank has no inhibitions about walking into traffic, injuring himself, or trying to drive a vehicle.

One of Purple Drank’s nicknames, “lean,” comes from the fact that users find themselves unbalanced and lean to one side when they are high.



WHAT’S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?

The worst-case scenario connected with purple drank is actually one that happens pretty often. That’s because it is very easy to overdose, and even if someone takes the “correct” dose, it turns deadly if it is combined with alcohol or other drugs. Because codeine slows the brain (sedates it), and promethazine increases that effect, Purple Drank can simply slow your brain to the point that it stops functioning. It has the same effect on the heart and lungs, so it can stop your breathing or stop your heartbeat. Any of these effects leads to immediate death or, if the user is fortunate, a lifelong crippling injury.

When purple drank combines in the body with alcohol, other narcotics, or any number of other mind-altering drugs, the effect on the central nervous system is amplified. This situation basically shuts down the nervous system and kills the user immediately.

IS IT ADDICTIVE?

Take it from Lil’ Wayne, who told an interviewer with MTV: “It...feels like death in your stomach when you stop doing that \*\*\*. You gotta learn how to stop, you gotta go through detox. You gotta do all kinds of stuff.” Translation: Once you start introducing codeine and promethazine to your brain, it takes hold of it and doesn’t let it go. Purple Drank is so expensive (even though your first drink will probably be offered



for free!) that once you’re addicted, you’ll have to either go broke buying more or suffer excruciating withdrawal symptoms. With each expensive drink, you will gain the benefit of shortening your brain’s life span and putting your most important bodily functions in danger.

WHAT HAPPENED TO DJ SCREW AND BIG MOE?

You don’t hear any new rap songs by DJ Screw or Big Moe any more. That’s because Purple Drank, the cool new drink that they loved so much, took both their lives. DJ Screw, combining codeine, promethazine, and alcohol, died in 2000 at the height of his career. Big Moe, failing to learn an important lesson, continued to take Purple Drank and died seven years later from a heart attack. Pimp C, a third rapper, was found dead in a hotel the same year with codeine and promethazine in his system. Compare these real-life tragedies with the

glamorous image presented by rap lyrics, and it’s easy to see that things just don’t add up. Purple Drank is not a fun pastime—it’s a poisonous cocktail that people keep drinking because they can’t stop.

Don’t follow Lil’ Wayne’s example. That’s advice from his own mouth during an interview with Katie Couric: “Never in my life would I ever set out to be an example for people on how to live their lives.” Drinking Purple Drank can ruin or end your life.

SIMILAR PRODUCTS

Companies and private dealers have tried to capitalize on the popularity of Purple Drank, while taking away some of its hazards. Less potent cough syrups and herbal ingredients, like rose hips, are contained in counterfeit drinks called “sippin’ syrup,” “drank,” and “lean.” Some of these drinks are even sold in stores, since they don’t contain the controlled medications in real Purple Drank. So, are these drinks safe? Doctors warn that once you try these imitation versions, you won’t be content until you try the real stuff. And once you do that, you’ve already exposed your brain, heart, and respiratory system to an addictive killer.

PURPLE DRANK IS AN ADDICTIVE, DEADLY KILLER.



Once you start introducing codeine and promethazine to your brain, it takes hold of it and doesn’t let it go.