### Drug Information Table

**Antitussives – opioid: codeine; nonopioid: dextromethorphan (Delsym)**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Therapeutic Use</th>
<th>Administration</th>
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</table>
| • Suppression of chronic, nonproductive cough | • Use only on a short-term basis.  
  • Use the lowest effective dose.  
  • Use only when needed. |

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<th>Side/Adverse Effects</th>
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| • CNS depression (drowsiness, sedation - common with opioid antitussives; only occurs in nonopioid antitussives if you give large doses or other CNS depressant drugs concurrently)  
• Dizziness, lightheadedness (more common with opioid antitussives) | • Monitor patients when changing positions or ambulating. | • Change positions gradually and sit or lie down if feeling lightheaded  
• Avoid alcohol and other CNS depressants when taking opioid antitussives  
• Do not take opioid antitussive prior to driving or activities requiring mental alertness. |

| • Gastrointestinal distress (nausea, vomiting) | • Administer drug with food or milk. | • Take the drug with food or milk.  
• Lie down when feeling nauseated. |

| • Constipation (opioids only) | • Encourage diet high in fluids and fiber.  
• Administer stool softener such as docusate sodium (Colace) and stimulant laxatives such as bisacodyl (Dulcolax). | • Increase fluid and dietary fiber intake. |

| • Respiratory depression (opioids only) | • Monitor respirations.  
• For respiratory rates below 12/min, stimulate breathing.  
• Administer an opioid antagonist such as naloxone (Narcan) to restore respiratory rate. | • Take the drug only when needed and short-term. |

| • Potential for abuse | • Give drug only when needed | • Take the drug only when needed and on a short-term basis.  
• Remove triggers that precipitate coughing from environment. |

### Contraindications

For opioids:  
• Acute asthma  
• Head trauma  
• Liver disease  
• Renal disease  
• Acute alcoholism

### Precautions

For all antitussives:  
• Prostatic hypertrophy  
• Reduced respiratory reserve (emphysema, chronic asthma)  
• History of substance abuse

For opioids:  
• Children  
• Older adults

### Interactions

• With opioids, alcohol and other CNS depressants increase CNS depression.  
• Nonopioid antitussives increase the analgesic effects of opioids.  
• St. John’s wort may increase sedation.