

MEDIA STATEMENT

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PAGB response to the effectiveness of cough medicines

A video produced by the American Chemical Society has questioned the effectiveness of over-the-counter cough medicines.

John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive, comments, “The video mentions a number of key ingredients found in over-the-counter cough medicines, guaifenesin, dextromethorphan, loratadine and ephedrine. However, it is very difficult to test the efficacy of these ingredients as not only are there different types of coughs, but they can differ from person to person in severity, duration and frequency. The producers of the video themselves conclude that more research needs to be done in this area.

“It’s important to remember that cough medicines will not ‘cure’ a cough. If used in accordance with the instructions on the packaging and in the patient information leaflet, then cough medicines are a safe way to help relieve the symptoms of a cough. They can help you get through a meeting at work, watch a play, or get to sleep without coughing, as the video itself mentions.

“The key to effective management of a cough is to identify the most troublesome symptom and to choose an appropriate product. Coughs on average last a week or two and the pharmacy should be the first port of call for people who are looking for advice on how to manage their cough symptoms. People are only advised to see their GP if symptoms are still present after three weeks.

“In regards to the video’s warning about overdosing on dextromethorphan, we would strongly remind people to check the pack instructions if they are unsure of the correct dosage amounts. If parents are unsure about the most suitable medicine to give to their children, then they should seek advice from their local pharmacist.

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Notes to editors:

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

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