

Pseudoephedrine and ephedrine

Pseudoephedrine and ephedrine products have been purchased from UK pharmacies and used in the illegal manufacture of an intensely addictive and dangerous Class A drug called methylamphetamine (also known as meth or crystal meth).

Of course, the person attempting to make a dishonest purchase may not be a user. In fact, experience from around the world tells us these people are rarely users. They may be male or female and of any age or background and therefore it is

important not to be misguided by any stereotypes you might have.

Pharmacists and pharmacy staff are good at telling when a medicine purchase doesn't feel quite right, so use your instincts. As well as asking for multiple packs, or making regular, repeat purchases, here are some things that might make you suspicious about someone requesting pseudoephedrine or ephedrine.

When asked for a medicine containing pseudoephedrine or ephedrine you should:

LOOK, LISTEN, REPORT YOUR SUSPICIONS

LOOK

Does the customer –

- ▲ **Appear nervous or guilty** (eg, unable to make eye contact or uncomfortable answering questions)?
- ▲ **Have no obvious symptoms of cough, cold or flu?**
- ▲ **Seem impatient or in a hurry to complete the transaction** (eg, having the correct money ready)?
- ▲ **Act in an aggressive manner and stance or alternatively speak quietly?**
- ▲ **Manipulate the environment to improve the chances of a successful purchase** (eg, waiting until the shop is busy or until younger or less senior staff are available)?

LISTEN

Does the customer –

- ▲ **Ask for products for someone else without being able to describe their symptoms?**
- ▲ **Give answers to questions that appear rehearsed?**
- ▲ **Ask for specific products by name** (particularly those containing only pseudoephedrine or ephedrine)?
- ▲ **Only want to buy liquid or combination products if tablets and capsules are not available?**
- ▲ **Attempt to purchase other products** (eg, lithium batteries) or **chemicals** (eg, acetone) **that could be used in the manufacture of methamphetamine?**

REPORT YOUR SUSPICIONS

What should you do?

- ✓ Individually these behaviours may not be suspicious, but when occurring together they are strong grounds for suspicion. Your report may be an important piece of information that can help stop a local methylamphetamine problem from escalating.
- ✓ If you are suspicious, **REPORT YOUR SUSPICIONS** to your area Royal Pharmaceutical Society Inspector.
- ✓ Before reporting your suspicions, make a note of what the customer looked like, what they were wearing and any notable features about them.
- ✓ Consider warning neighbouring community pharmacies about the customer.



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