



DATE: January 2005
DATELINE: Darke County, Ohio

Wright State University
The University of Akron

Reports from Darke County of Juveniles Consuming Large Quantities of Iodine in Attempt to Pass Drug Tests

The OSAM Network was contacted by treatment professionals in **Darke County, Ohio** to report an alarming trend among a small group of court-involved juveniles in that county. According to treatment professionals, some juveniles in **Darke County** have been consuming iodine tablets in an attempt to pass drug tests mandated by the juvenile probation department.

Typically, iodine is used by individuals participating in outdoor recreational activities such as camping or hiking as an effective means of purifying drinking water. Iodine tablets are available at most camping supply stores, and used appropriately they are very effective at killing bacteria and other germs in drinking water.

It appears that these **Darke County** juveniles may have erroneously concluded that ingesting iodine would cleanse their urine of the drug byproducts in much the same way as it purifies drinking water of germs. Reportedly, this dangerous practice is being reinforced by the false perception that the technique is actually effective, and does result in a "clean" drug test.

Ingesting iodine in large amounts or over prolonged periods of time can result in serious health consequences. **Darke County** treatment professionals are reporting that several of these juveniles have already experienced tissue and organ damage as a result. In fact, one juvenile has reportedly undergone an organ transplant.

Although this misuse of iodine tablets does not appear to be a significant trend that is affecting large numbers of juveniles across the state, the OSAM Network believed dissemination of this information to professionals working with juveniles was important, given the serious health effects and potential lethality of consuming large amounts of iodine.

For more detailed information regarding iodine and the health effects of consuming the chemical, visit the Ohio Early Warning Network (OEWN) at eBasedPrevention.org (<http://www.ebasedprevention.org>).

If you have received similar reports regarding this dangerous use of iodine among individuals in your community, you are encouraged to contact OEWN or the OSAM Network.

OSAM-O-GRAMS report key findings of the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring (OSAM) Network. Informants located throughout the state use qualitative and quantitative data to provide semiannual monitoring of substance abuse trends. The OSAM Network is funded by the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services by contract to Wright State University and by subcontract to the University of Akron. This OSAM-O-GRAM is based on a field report received December 2004.

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