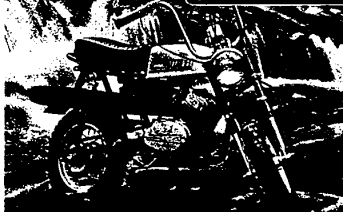


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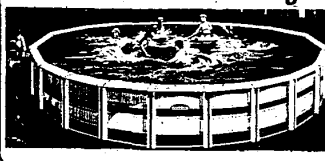
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P.O. BOX - Drugs

Bromides Have Bad Side Effects

Questions should be sent to the Community Commission on Drug Abuse, P.O. Box 48151, Livonia, Mich. 48151.

Q. Last week your column dealt with non-prescription sleeping pills. Just out of curiosity, I checked out the ones in my own medicine cabinet. The ingredients were about what you had mentioned plus some more that weren't mentioned. I'm enclosing the portion of the carton they came in that lists the ingredients. What do you make of them? Are they safe?

Mrs. L.V. Westland

A. The ingredients that had you puzzled are bromides. This class of drugs does have a sedative effect. In the amounts given they would have a slight calming effect rather than a sleep-inducing effect.

Bromides have been around for more than a century and at one time were in great vogue. Today their use is held in very low repute. The reason is the great incidence of possibly harmful side-effects.

To merely list the possible undesirable side-effects would more than fill this entire column. Some of the more prominent effects are:

- 1) Mental disturbances including impaired thought and memory, delirium, delusions and hallucinations.
- 2) Nervous system disturbances such as incoordination, tremors and thickened speech.
- 3) Blood abnormalities, especially a condition known as methemoglobinemia which will ultimately produce an intensely purple skin coloration.
- 4) Kidney damage.

One of the real problems with the bromides is that they are very slowly excreted by the body so that a dose taken on one day may have an additive effect due to some of the drug still remaining from a dose taken days earlier.

Obviously the possible benefits of these drugs can scarcely outweigh the potential hazards. Certainly they are not to be recommended for self-medication. It should be pointed out that the bromides exist not merely in some sleeping preparations, but also in some sedative "remedies" and in at least one highly-touted after-sweat headache preparation.

Q. I overheard some young people talking about "popping" something called amyl nitrate. I do some drug counseling, but can't find any reference to this drug. Is it dangerous enough to warrant my discussing with these young people or is it just a childish fad like smoking banana peels?

Mr. J.B. Livonia

A. The drug in question is amyl nitrite and is supplied in fragile glass containers enclosed in a woven, absorbent material to permit crushing in the hand for inhalation. It has a legitimate use for angina pectoris. Its effects appear in about 30 seconds and last for three to five minutes.

It has been abused for the transitory "rush" that may be produced. Side-effects are not insignificant and include nausea, vomiting, rapid heart beat, involuntary passing of urine and feces. Excessively high doses may produce a purple-spotted skin.

The drug is not addicting, but tolerance (the need for higher and higher doses to produce an effect) does occur. Yes, it would be very beneficial to mention these dangers to the young people in question.

Reps Split

State representatives from Observerland split along party lines when voting on the state's \$337 million welfare bill that was defeated in the first House vote Wednesday.

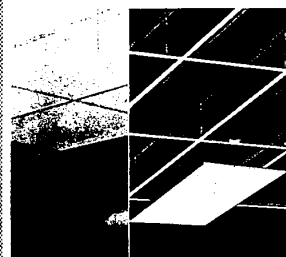
The bill only got 46 "yes" votes and 55 "no" (56 votes are needed for passage).

Voting for the bill, which is \$120 million more than last year's welfare bill, were Reps. Richard Young (D-Deerborn Heights), John Bennett (D-Redford Township), Marvin Stempier (D-Livonia), and Joseph Forbes (D-Oak Park).

Against the bill were Reps. Raymond Baker (R-Farmington) and James Delebaugh (R-Birmingham).

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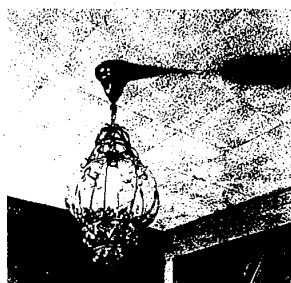


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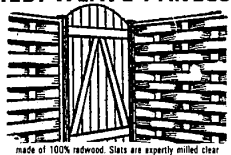
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