

# Don't Be a Pill

By Reg P. Wydeven  
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When my wife and I get up in the morning, the first thing we typically reach for is an ice-cold can of Diet Mountain Dew. After taking a huge gulp, I will invariably say something like, "Ah, nectar of the gods." Or, "that's good for what ails you." Or maybe, "it's just what the doctor ordered."

While a Diet Dew first thing in the morning is probably one of the last things a doctor would order, we kiddingly say the soda is the prescription for a good day. After downing the Dew, we then proceed to take our actual prescriptive medications, most of which attempt to combat our horrific allergies.

Our family is certainly grateful for our allergy medications, and take our prescriptions seriously. After all, without our antihistamines, hay fever is snot fun at our house. Many people rightfully believe that prescription medication is nothing to joke about.

After receiving a letter signed by attorneys general from 22 states, Urban Outfitters has decided to stop selling some of their products, most notably a coffee mug, that feature the company's "Prescription: Coffee" design. The products are adorned with prescription labels and instructions such as: "RX#: VRY-CAF-N8D. Drink one mug by mouth, repeat until awake and alert." In their letter, the AGs asked Urban Outfitters to pull the products, claiming that prescription drug abuse is a very serious matter and not something to be joked about.

With over 170 stores worldwide, Urban Outfitters is a retailer described as selling hip, stylish, kitschy and bizarre merchandise. The company caters to its 18- to 30-year-old "hipster" customers, incorporating influences from past decades.

After numerous complaints from consumers that the packaging for Urban Outfitters' "Prescription: Coffee" products could lead to confusion and potential health problems, the AGs wrote their letter.

In addition to the AGs, the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) and 57 local U.S. poison centers also wrote a letter to the retailer asking the company to halt production of the products, arguing that they make light of the seriousness of prescription medication.

The AAPCC pointed out in its letter that in 2011, nearly 210,000 patients were treated by local poison centers for exposure to painkillers that were either misused or abused, either intentionally or accidentally.

In response, Urban Outfitters pulled the products and released a statement that read: "In the 20,000 products that comprise our assortment, there are styles that represent humor, satire, and hyperbole. In this extensive range of product we recognize that from time to time there may be individual items that are misinterpreted by people who are not our customer. As a result of this misinterpretation we are electing to discontinue these few styles from our current product offering."

The AAPCC has praised Urban Outfitters for discontinuing their "Prescription: Coffee" campaign, especially since the company targets younger customers who are susceptible to prescription drug abuse.

As a result of the snafu, Urban Outfitters purportedly also decided to stop production of their coffee stirrers designed to look like cigarettes.

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