

Fentanyl - Parent Alert

Curiosity and risk taking is a normal part of the teen and young adult years. The teenage brain continues to develop throughout the early part of adulthood – especially the areas in charge of impulse control. Your teen may find themselves in risky situation where alcohol and/or drugs may be available.

The issue:

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit and Eastern Ontario Health Unit are alerting local schools and communities that in recent weeks in our region there have been several overdoses and deaths from fake prescription opioid medications. Fake prescription medications are made to look like the real prescription opioids. Prescription opioids include medication like morphine, Percocet and fentanyl. Getting drugs from a drug dealer, ordered online or from a friend is very risky and potentially life threatening.

Within our region, illicit fentanyls have been confirmed in a variety of both fake prescription pills, as well as other street drugs such as cocaine, crystal meth, heroin and marijuana. Illicit fentanyls are known to be deadly in small amounts such as the size of a grain of salt, making the risk of overdosing extremely high.

What is prescription fentanyl and how is it different from illicit fentanyl?

Prescription Fentanyl is a pain medication that comes in a patch or liquid and is manufactured under strict guidelines and controlled environment. Opioids are a depressant drug, which means that they slow down the part of the brain that controls breathing. Overdose of opioids can result in death because breathing stops. All opioid drugs can be dangerous and need to be taken as prescribed by a medical professional.

Non-prescription Fentanyl is known as illicit fentanyl, and is made in underground labs, where the production is not controlled. We currently know that there 14 different types of illicit fentanyls, all with varying levels of toxicity. Illicit fentanyls especially mixed in with other street drugs or being sold as fake prescription drugs, has a higher risk of causing a fatal overdose because;

1. A small amount can be fatal – as little as equivalent 1 grain of salt;
2. People may not be aware that they are consuming it as it can be disguised as other drugs.

What do I need to know?

Prescription Fentanyl is about 100 times more toxic than morphine.

Illicit fentanyls may be as high as 10,000 times more toxic than morphine.

Fact is: you never really know what you're getting.

Fentanyl is being sold on the street as:

- **Faded 80's**
- **Fake Oxy's**
- **Greenies**
- **Green Beanies**
- **Green Monsters**
- **Fentanyl Powder**

How to reduce the risk: start the conversation!!

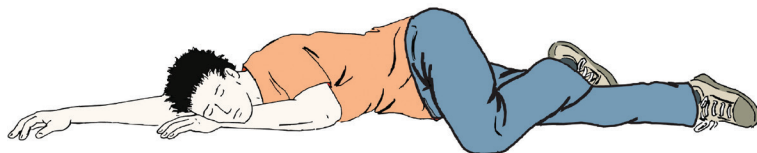
- Offer your child control of the situation. Let them pick the time and place.
- Look for opportunities, like when you discuss school or current events.
- Plan the main points you want to discuss, rather than speaking on impulse. Avoid saying everything at once.

Instead, keep it brief and target a few main points.

- Listen to your child and respect their opinions. If they see you as a good listener, they may be more inclined to trust your input. Give your child room to participate and ask questions and avoid being judgmental.
- Focus on facts rather than emotions. If you hear that a young person is using drugs, you may feel anger, sadness, fear or confusion. These feelings are natural, but talking about the issue is more productive than talking about your feelings.
- Respect their independence. Tell your child you are trying to help them to make good decisions and communicate that your main concern is their well-being.
- You are your child's most important role model and their best defense against drug use.

Know what to do if someone is in trouble!

- **CALL 911** (if you think someone is in trouble you have to always make the call)
- Get trained on how to give Naloxone and have a Naloxone kit with you
- Get trained in first aid and CPR
- Know how to put someone in the recovery position and when to use the recovery position



Get a Naloxone Kit

Naloxone is the drug used to stop an overdose from illicit fentanyl and other opioid pain medication. A Naloxone kit is used to stop someone from overdosing and allows time for the person to get to a hospital to receive medical treatment in order to save their life. If you have a Naloxone kit you should carry it with you, especially when you are going to be using substances. It is no good to you or anyone else if it is at home in your bedroom!

You can get Naloxone kits from the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit and at some local pharmacies.

For more tips on starting the conversation with your kids:

Eastern Ontario Health Unit

1-800-267-7120

www.EOHU.ca

Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit

1-800-660-5853

www.healthunit.org

