

Fentanyl - Student Alert

During your teen and young adult years, you will be exposed to alcohol and other drugs. Deciding to use alcohol or other drugs is a personal choice. But like any personal choice you can make an informed choice.

If you choose to use alcohol or other drugs inform yourself of the risks and consequences when using these drugs. If you choose to use alcohol or other drugs inform yourself of ways that you can reduce the risk of harm to yourself and others when using these drugs.

The issue:

In recent weeks, there have been several deaths within our region from fake prescription 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 your 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 extremely low amount such as the size of a grain of salt, making the risk of overdosing extremely high.

Why are we concerned about illicit fentanyl?

These drugs have caused hundreds of deaths in Ontario. There are currently 14 known different types of illicit fentanyls. There are multiple concerns about these drugs;

1. They are made in underground labs where there is little control over the quality of the drug being made.
2. Each of the 14 types has a different level of toxicity such as a drug called carfentanil which may be as much as 10,000 times more toxic than morphine.
3. A dose as small as 1 grain of salt may be enough to be life threatening.
4. You may not know you are taking these drugs, as they are being hidden in other drugs like cocaine, crystal meth, heroin or marijuana. It is also being sold as a different prescription drugs like percocet or oxycontin.
5. You can overdose from these drugs.

Illicit fentanyls may be known by the following names:

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

If you choose to use, reduce your risk by:

1. It is your choice!

Only you should be making the choice of what you do or don't put into your body. Never take anything that you are not 100% sure what it is or where it has come from.

2. Do your research!

You need to know and understand what you are putting into your body. Can you answer the following questions with certainty: What is the substance? How was it made? Has it been altered? What should the substance do to you?

What are the side effects of taking the substance? What will you do if your experience is not what you expected?
If it looks, smells or tastes different then be cautious about using it!

3. Prevent an overdose from happening!

If you choose to use, following these tips will help to prevent an overdose:

- Never use alone (if you end up in trouble there will be no one to help you)
- Never mix drugs (especially pain medication and alcohol or with anti-anxiety medication)
- If you are using a new substance, always take a small test dose first to see how it is going to affect you.
- Overdoses can happen to anyone, there is no magic formula to say who will overdose and who will not.
- Use where help is easily available.

4. Know the signs of an overdose!

People having an overdose from pain medications such as Fentanyl will have one or more of the following signs:

- The person is “**nodding off**”, or won’t wake up easily or unresponsive
- They may be breathing very slowly or not at all
- Their lips and fingernails turn blue
- Their skin is cold and clammy
- Their body is limp
- They may be snoring or gurgling
- They may throw up

5. 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

6. Know how to put someone in the recovery position and when to use the recovery position.



What is 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 allow 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 your local Health Unit and at some local pharmacies.

Eastern Ontario Health Unit

1-800-267-7120

www.EOHU.ca



Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit

1-800-660-5853

www.healthunit.org

