

Fentanyl - Parent Alert

Curiosity and risk taking are 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 situations where alcohol and/or drugs may be available.

The issue:

Renfrew County and District Health Unit is alerting local schools and communities that the potential for overdoses and deaths from fake prescription opioid drugs exists in Renfrew County and District. Fake prescription opioid drugs are made to look like real prescription opioids. Prescription opioids include morphine, Percocet and fentanyl. Getting any drugs from a drug dealer, online or a friend is very risky and potentially life threatening.

Illicit fentanyls can be in a variety of 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 in a controlled environment. Opioids are depressant drugs, which means that they slow down the part of the brain that controls breathing. Overdose of opioids can cause breathing to stop, resulting in death. 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 are 14 different types of illicit fentanyls, all with varying levels of toxicity. Illicit fentanyls, especially mixed with other street drugs or sold as fake prescription drugs have a higher risk of causing a fatal overdose because:

1. A small amount can be fatal – as little as the equivalent of a 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.

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, **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.



What is a Naloxone Kit?

- Naloxone is a drug that can reverse a fentanyl or other opioid overdose.

Naloxone kits are available free of charge to:

- Anyone 16 years of age or older who currently uses opioids or has a history of opioid use.
- A friend or family member of anyone at-risk of opioid overdose.

Naloxone kits are available at:

- Renfrew County and District Health Unit offices
- Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre
- Participating pharmacies



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

613-735-8666 or 1-800-267-1097

www.rcdhu.com

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