

# Fentanyl: Youth Prevention

According to officials with the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Fentanyl is the deadliest drug threat facing our nation. Fentanyl is a highly addictive synthetic opioid 50 times more potent than heroin, and up to 100 times more potent than morphine. Fentanyl is not only very strong, but it is relatively cheap to produce. Drug traffickers are increasingly mixing it with other types of drugs in powder or pill form, increasing its presence in illicit street drugs. The DEA lab testing has found that 7 out of every 10 pills with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose. In 2023, the DEA seized more than 79.5 million fentanyl laced fake pills and nearly 12, 000 pounds of fentanyl powder.

The drug landscape is ever changing and the way in which youth access drugs is vastly different compared to earlier generations. According to the DEA, many drug traffickers are using social media to advertise drugs and conduct sales. While fentanyl can be hidden in a variety of substances, counterfeit pills that contain fentanyl are a common concern. Fentanyl laced fake prescription pills are frequently made to look like Xanax, hydrocodone, Vicodin, or Adderall. Thanks to social media and other online channels they are easy to buy. A young person buying illicit drugs may think they know what they're getting, but there is a risk of it containing fentanyl, and that risk could be deadly.

## COUNTERFEIT DRUGS

OXYCODONE



**REAL**

**FAKE**

ADDERALL



**REAL**

**FAKE**

SOURCE: DEA

With the increase in fentanyl laced substances, it is important for adults and caregivers to recognize the signs of a fentanyl overdose. If you suspect someone has overdosed, call 911 immediately. Naloxone is a lifesaving medication that can rapidly reverse the effects of an overdose, if given in time. Overdose symptoms may include:

- Small, constricted “pinpoint pupils”
- Falling asleep or losing consciousness
- Slow, weak, or no breathing; limp body
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Cold and/or clammy skin

So how do we prevent fentanyl from getting into the hands of our kids? The DEA encourages parents and caregivers to start by educating themselves on current drug threats as a means to engage in informed conversations with youth. As with any type of substance use prevention education, it is a conversation that has to be ongoing and happen more than once. Below are some points to consider when talking to kids and teens about fentanyl.

- It is never too early to talk to kids about drug use, especially the dangers of Fentanyl. Using age-appropriate language, start with a conversation about making healthy decisions as a means to ease into the heavy conversation of fentanyl.
- Listen first: ask your youth non-judgmental questions. Is fentanyl something that you have heard about in the news or at school? What have you heard?
- Explain the facts: explain what fentanyl is and why it is so dangerous. Stress that fentanyl in any form can be deadly.
- Stress not to take any pills that were not prescribed to them by their doctor.
- Send a message to youth that all drugs are potentially dangerous and many of them can contain fentanyl. There is no way to recognize if the drugs someone is buying on the street or online are contaminated with fentanyl and even small amounts of fentanyl can lead to overdose.
- Make sure your child knows that the danger of fentanyl is not limited to drugs bought from a stranger on the street or online. Dispel the myth that drugs bought from ‘trusted sources’ including friends or known dealers are safe. The person selling or sharing the drugs may not even know that what they are distributing contains fentanyl.

Below are some additional resources to increase awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and engage in conversations with youth.

**The DEA “One Pill Can Kill” Initiative offers some great resources for parents and educators to learn more about Fentanyl.** <https://www.dea.gov/onepill>

What Every Parent and Caregiver Needs to Know About Fake Pills

[https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/DEA-OPCK\\_Parent\\_Flyer\\_September\\_2023.pdf](https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/DEA-OPCK_Parent_Flyer_September_2023.pdf)

Emoji Drug Code: Decoded- A quick reference guide to give parents, caregivers, and educators a better sense of how emojis are being used in conjunction with illegal drugs

[https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/Emoji%20Decoded\\_FO%20One%20Page\\_v2.pdf](https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/Emoji%20Decoded_FO%20One%20Page_v2.pdf)

Buying Drugs Online: What You Should Know and How to Protect Your Kids

<https://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov/family/buying-drugs-online-%E2%80%93-what-you-should-know-how-protect-your-kids>

**Natural High Fentanyl Toolkit- a resource for parents and educators to help protect kids from the dangers of fentanyl.**

<https://www.naturalhigh.org/fentanyl/>

References: <https://facingfentanylnow.org/>; Get Smart About Drugs; Nationwide Children’s; Natural High; Partnership to End Addiction; United States Drug Enforcement Administration

# TALK TO YOUR TEEN

*Your conversation can make a difference.*

When emotions run high, teenagers might turn to alcohol or drugs to cope. Not only is this a problem because their brains are still developing, but often they turn to social media to purchase these substances from strangers which end up being fake pills laced with fentanyl.

Talk to your teens about the risks of substance use and order your box of no-cost NARCAN® Nasal Spray today.

## SCAN HERE TO ORDER NO-COST NARCAN



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