

FENTANYL FAQ

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIED OF FENTANYL OVERDOSES IN BC?

- The BC Coroners Service reports that in BC, there were over 300 drug overdose deaths in 2014 – 25% of those involved Fentanyl (a 20% rise over 2012 overdoses involving Fentanyl)
- Fentanyl has been detected in drug deaths throughout BC, with the largest numbers of deaths in Vancouver, Nanaimo, Surrey, Maple Ridge, Prince George, Langley and Fort St. John



WHAT IS FENTANYL?

- Fentanyl is a narcotic prescription drug used mostly for cancer patients in severe pain
- It is roughly 50 to 100 times more toxic than other drugs like morphine or heroin
- Heroin, cocaine, oxycodone, marijuana and other drugs can be cut with Fentanyl, in powder, liquid or pill form
- If you are using illegal drugs, you may be using Fentanyl and not even know it. Recently, RCMP have seized large quantities of marijuana that when analyzed, had traces of Fentanyl
- You can't see it, smell it or taste it, but if your drug of choice is cut with Fentanyl, it can kill you

WHERE DO THESE DRUGS COME FROM?

- RCMP have found illegally manufactured Fentanyl being sold in:
 - Pill form – being sold as fake oxy's and other club drugs
 - Powder form – sold as heroin or fent
 - Powder form – mixed into other drugs like cocaine, crystal meth and other drugs
- Pills or powders containing illegally-manufactured Fentanyl are especially dangerous because there is no quality control or regulated manufacturing process
- These drugs may contain toxic contaminants or have different levels of Fentanyl in each batch – even pills made in the same batch may have little to lethal levels of Fentanyl
- Some prescription Fentanyl is also sold on the street and is used by sucking on patches or cutting the patch to extract for injecting by needle
- Patches are designed for specific medical usage – used any other way may lead to an overdose



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Opioid Overdose Signs & Symptoms

Don't use alone

Breathing will be slow or absent



Lips and nails are blue



Person is not moving



Person may be choking



You can hear gurgling sounds or snoring



Can't be woken up



Skin feels cold and clammy



Pupils are tiny



PREVENTING AN OVERDOSE

While we advise against using illicit drugs, people who do choose to use should be sure to:

- Never use alone
- Start with a small amount
- Do not mix substances, including alcohol, as it increases risk of overdose
- Call 911 right away if you think someone is overdosing
- Make a plan and know how to respond in case of an overdose use where help is easily available
- Be prepared to give CPR until help arrives
- Get a naloxone kit and learn how to use it

Follow the **SAVE ME** steps below to respond.



If the person must be left unattended at any time, put them in the recovery position.



Stimulate

Unresponsive? **CALL 911**



Airway



Ventilate

1 breath every 5 seconds



Evaluate

GET A NALOXONE KIT AND LEARN HOW TO USE IT

- Naloxone is an antidote for opioid overdose
- The kits are available for **FREE** to anyone who uses opioids (either prescribed medications or street drugs)
- You can get training and a kit from Three Corners Health by talking to one of the nurses or counsellors

