

Fentanyl - Parent Fact Sheet

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:

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is alerting local schools and community that, as of June 1, 2016, there is confirmation of Bootleg (non-prescription) Fentanyl available in our area. Bootleg Fentanyl is a powdered form of Fentanyl with 100% purity. There have been numerous reports in Ontario cities of Bootleg Fentanyl in pill and powder form being sold as OxyContin, heroin and other substances. Bootleg Fentanyl might also be mixed into other recreational drugs, including stimulants such as cocaine and MDMA (ecstasy).

What is Prescription Fentanyl and how is it different from Bootleg Fentanyl?

Prescription Fentanyl is a pain medicine that comes in a transdermal patch or liquid and is manufactured under strict guidelines and controlled environment. Prescription Fentanyl is made from opioids (chemicals used to treat sudden and ongoing pain). 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.

Fentanyl is a more concentrated opioid and is prescribed to patients who have tried other opioids that have been ineffective for their pain (eg. from cancer). Prescription Fentanyl should be used as prescribed by the person it is prescribed for.

Non-prescription Fentanyl is known as Bootleg Fentanyl, and is made on the street. Guidelines are not followed and the production is not controlled so the person taking Bootleg Fentanyl has no idea what is in the drug they are taking. Bootleg Fentanyl has the potential to be even more fatal than the prescription Fentanyl because:

1. A small amount can be fatal – as little as equivalent 2 grains 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:

Fentanyl is about 100 times more toxic than morphine, heroin or oxycodone.

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

Fentanyl is often sold on the street as:

- Faded 80's
- Fake Oxy's
- K22's
- Greenies
- A215s
- Green Beanies

But no matter what you buy...**Fentanyl may be hiding in the drugs you are using and it can kill you.**

How to Reduce the risk: Start the Conversation!!

- Offer them 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 them and respect their opinions. If they see you as a good listener, they may be more inclined to trust your input. Give them 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 them you are trying to help them to make good decisions and communicate that your main concern is their well-being.
- Recognize that experimentation and mistakes happen. The teenage brain is still developing - especially the areas in charge of impulse control and your teen may place themselves in risky situations. Help your teen reflect on a mistake and turn it into learning opportunity(make sure you are both calm and rational)
- You are your teenager's most important role model and their best defense against drug use.

For more tips on starting the conversation with your kids:

Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit

http://www.healthunit.org/harmreduction/fentanyl_response.html

Stats, Facts & Talking Points About Alcohol and Other Drugs – Parent Action Pack

<http://parentactionpack.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Parent-Action-Pack-December-2014-Version.pdf>

Talk About Drugs – Government of Canada

<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/healthy-living-vie-saine/substance-abuse-toxicomanie/talking-parle/teens-adolescents-eng.php>



For more information, please call the
Health ACTION Line at **1-800-660-5853**
or visit our website at www.healthunit.org