

FENTANYL: Information for Teachers, Parents, and Caregivers

What you need to know?

- You may have heard recently about a dangerous drug called fentanyl that is causing a lot of harm across Canada. This document will provide you with the basic information you should know.
- Fentanyl is an opioid (painkiller) that can be used safely when it is prescribed by a health professional and taken as directed. But it is also being made and sold illegally. Fentanyl can be 50 to 100 times more toxic than morphine.
- Fentanyl is very toxic. Just a small amount of fentanyl, the size of two grains of salt, can be deadly. Fentanyl is made and sold in many different forms and can be hiding in other drugs.
- Overdoses are increasingly linked with fentanyl. All sectors of society have been affected: from people (including youth) who use daily to those casually experimenting.
- **OVERDOSES DON'T DISCRIMINATE.** With an issue this critical, it's important that youth not rely on inaccurate information they may hear through social media or by word-of-mouth.
- Drug dealers often sell fentanyl as fake oxycodone. Buyers may think they're getting oxycodone, but they're getting another opioid drug that has fentanyl and other substances in it. On the street, these drugs have nicknames like green beans, beans, green apples, apples, shady eighties, eighties, fake oxy, and greenies.

Talk to the kids in your life

Kids and young adults are especially vulnerable to substances since their brains are still developing. It is not always easy, but talking to your kids about fentanyl and other dangerous drugs is one of the best things you can do to keep them safe.

- You can start a conversation by telling your kids you care about them and you want them to be safe.
- Ask them what they know about fentanyl and encourage open and honest communication.
- Ask your kids to tell you if they are ever around drugs and let them know it is ok to say no if they are ever offered drugs.
- Tell your kids what you know about fentanyl. For example:
 - It's a very dangerous drug that is being seen more and more in our province.
 - 9 people died in Newfoundland and Labrador between 2014-16 from fentanyl overdose.
 - If you take fentanyl, it can stop your breathing.
 - It can be hiding in any street drug and may even look like prescription medication.
 - Drug dealers may not know if the product they are selling contains fentanyl.
 - The amount of fentanyl required to overdose is comparable to a few grains of salt.

What can parents and caregivers do?

As parents and caregivers, you are an important influence in your kids' lives. Although there is no guaranteed way to prevent drug use, there are some things you can do that are known to be helpful:

- Spend quality time with your kids, be involved in their lives.
- Encourage and support your kids to help them do well in school. Support and help your kids be involved in activities that build on their interest, hobbies (sports, learning, community activities, and leadership development).
- Get educated, and help youth understand the risks and consequences of drug use and have clear expectations.
- Support your kids to make healthy decisions and tell them what to do if someone is pressuring them or their friends to use drugs.

If you think your child might be using fentanyl or other drugs, there is help. Call the Newfoundland and Labrador Healthline at 811 and their trained staff will help you.

What can teachers do?

As teachers, you contribute to healthy and supportive school environments and help students make positive choices. Talk to your students about drugs, and promote drug-use prevention initiatives in your school. Prevention initiatives that have been shown to be helpful in the school setting include:

- student led programs;
- programs that connect students with positive role models (mentoring);
- encouraging meaningful participation (student council, peer tutoring);
- programs that focus on life skills (social skills, managing conflict, etc.).

Research shows that the most effective drug prevention programs focus on positive social and behavioural development and put the students at the centre of the design, taking their needs and realities into account.

Signs of an overdose

If you are using drugs, or are with someone who has used drugs, and you or they have any of these symptoms call 911:

- breathing is slow or not breathing at all
- nails and/or lips are blue
- choking or throwing up
- making gurgling sounds
- skin is cold and clammy
- can't wake them up

Learn more about overdose prevention and what you can do to keep yourself and others safe at:

www.drugsfool.ca

General harm reduction messages to prevent overdose

There are ways to prevent or reduce the chance of experiencing an overdose. If someone chooses to use drugs these tips can help to reduce or even prevent an overdose.

- Know your health status and your tolerance
- Do not mix drugs and alcohol.
- Be aware: using drugs while on prescribed medications can increase overdose risk
- Don't use alone. Leave door unlocked. Tell someone to check on you
- Do testers to check strength. Use less. Pace yourself
- Talk to an experienced person or a trusted healthcare provider about reducing risk
- Carry a naloxone kit and know how to use it

Responding to an Opioid overdose

When someone overdoses on fentanyl, they may stop breathing. If you come across someone who you think may be overdosing and is not breathing:

1. Call 911 immediately.

2. Follow these steps:

Stimulate (to see if a person is responsive)

Airway (check and clear)

Ventilate (1 breath every 5 seconds)

Evaluate and muscular Injection (1ml of naloxone if available)

Evaluate (consider second dose of naloxone if needed)

3. Stay with the person until help arrives.

- **Rescue breathing is best performed with a barrier mask to prevent the potential transfer of disease.**
- **Naloxone is a drug that may help someone start breathing again after an opioid overdose if given right away. However, its effect is only temporary and it is important for the individual to receive emergency medical attention. Call 811 to find a Take Home Naloxone distribution site.**

This resource tool has been adapted for use with permission from Alberta Health.

More Information and Resources

Fentanyl and Naloxone

- www.drugsfool.ca
- <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/padis/hi-padis-fentanyl-faq.pdf>
- <http://towardtheheart.com/fentanyl/>
- http://towardtheheart.com/assets/naloxone/tth-odsignssymptoms_118.pdf

Overdose Awareness

- http://towardtheheart.com/assets/naloxone/od-awareness---opioids_178.pdf
- **Rescue Breathing:**
http://www.redcross.ca/crc/documents/What-We-Do/First-Aid-and-CPR/Workplace/Online-Tools/fa_onlinetools_skills_summaries_rescue_breathing_and_suctioning.pdf
- **SAVE ME Poster:**
http://towardtheheart.com/assets/naloxone/save-me-poster-centered-20120829_121.pdf

Resources for Parents and Caregivers

- **Bridge the gAPP** is a free mobile app and website supporting mental health in Newfoundland and Labrador (includes a provincial service directory and resources for parents): <http://www.bridgethegapp.ca>
- <http://www.canadadrugfree.org/protect-your-family/tips-for-parents/>
- <http://www.drugfree.org/the-parent-toolkit/>
- <http://parentactionondrugs.org/for-parents/parent-and-community-handbook/>
- <http://parentactionondrugs.org/for-parents/parent-action-pack/>
- <http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/workbook/the-road-ahead-a-guidebook-for-parents-of-young-teens-about-alcohol-and-other-drugs>
- http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/alt_formats/pdf/pubs/adp-apd/talk-aborder/talk-aborder-eng.pdf