

# TALK WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT FENTANYL

## A TIP SHEET FOR PARENTS

### WHAT IS FENTANYL?

Fentanyl comes in two forms: pharmaceutical fentanyl and illicitly manufactured fentanyl. Both are classified as synthetic opioids. Pharmaceutical fentanyl is given by doctors to relieve severe pain, particularly after surgery and for advanced-stage cancer. However, most incidents of fentanyl overdoses are now associated with illicitly produced fentanyl, which is sold on illegal drug markets for its effects that resemble those of heroin. Because of its immense strength, illicit fentanyl is frequently mixed with other drugs, making them more cost-effective, potent, addictive, and hazardous.

### HOW BIG IS THE RISK FROM FENTANYL?

Fentanyl is undetectable by taste or smell, and is too tiny to see. In fact, a quantity as small as two grains of salt can trigger an overdose or fatality. The only "safe" way to use fentanyl is when it is prescribed by a doctor, monitored, and administered according to strict guidelines to manage pain related to a condition or injury. Unfortunately, street drugs are often mixed with fentanyl long before they reach the people teenagers trust to obtain them, including friends, dealers, and acquaintances. Fentanyl can be found anywhere, since its distribution in pills and powders is entirely random. While one pill may not be lethal, another could be.

### HOW BAD IS THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC AND DEATHS FROM FENTANYL?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that in the 12-month period ending in January 2022, 107,375 individuals in the United States died as a result of drug overdoses and poisonings. An astonishing 67 percent of these fatalities were linked to synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. Many of these deaths were caused by fentanyl mixed with other illegal substances such as cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin, and a significant number of users were unaware that they were taking fentanyl.

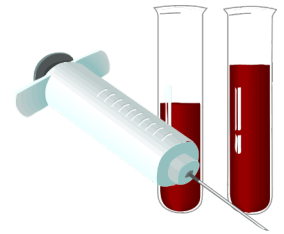
### HOW ARE TEENS BUYING FENTANYL LACED DRUGS?

Drug traffickers have turned smartphones into a one-stop shop to market, sell, buy, and deliver deadly, fake prescription pills and other dangerous drugs. In just three steps, deadly drugs can be purchased and delivered to your home just like any other good or service.

Drug traffickers advertise on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter and YouTube. These advertisements are in disappearing, 24-hour stories and in posts, which are promptly posted and removed. Posts and stories are often accompanied by known code words and emojis that are used to market and sell illicit and deadly drugs on social media. These code words and emojis are designed to evade detection by law enforcement and by the preset algorithms used by social media platforms.

Once contact is made, drug traffickers and potential buyers often move to an encrypted communications app like WhatsApp, Signal, and Telegram. Drug traffickers typically switch to these encrypted communications apps to arrange drug deals with prospective buyers.

After a deal is made, drug traffickers request payment using one-click apps like Venmo, Zelle, Cash App, and Remitly.



50-100x MORE POTENT  
THAN MORPHINE

**59%**  
OF OPIOID-RELATED  
DEATHS INVOLVE  
FENTANYL

**NALOXONE**  
CAN REVERSE AN OPIOID  
OVERDOSE AND CAN BE  
PURCHASED OVER THE  
COUNTER WITHOUT A  
PRESCRIPTION

**60%**  
OF PILLS THAT  
CONTAINED FENTANYL  
HAD A LETHAL DOSE

**5,692**  
15 TO 24 YEAR OLDS DIED  
OF FENTANYL POISONING  
IN 2021

As a parent, it can be difficult to talk to your teenager about sensitive topics like drug use. However, it's important to have open and honest conversations with your teen about the dangers of vaping, marijuana, and counterfeit pills. Here are some tips to help guide your conversation:

### 1. Educate yourself

Before having the conversation with your teen, make sure you educate yourself on the dangers of Fentanyl and counterfeit pills. Learn about the health risks, legal consequences, and signs of use. Having a clear understanding of the risks will help you have a more informed conversation with your teen.

### 2. Create a safe and comfortable environment

Make sure your teen feels comfortable and safe when having this conversation. Choose a quiet and private place where your teen won't feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. Encourage your teen to ask questions and share their thoughts and feelings.

### 3. Start the conversation

Start the conversation by expressing your concerns about Fentanyl and counterfeit pills. Be clear and honest about the risks and dangers associated with these substances. Explain that you want your teen to be healthy and safe, and that you're there to support them.

### 4. Listen and be open

Listen to your teen's perspective and be open to their thoughts and feelings. Avoid lecturing or talking down to them. Instead, try to have a two-way conversation where you both share your opinions and concerns.

### 5. Set clear boundaries

Make sure your teen knows your expectations regarding drug use. Set clear boundaries and consequences for breaking those boundaries. For example, you may want to set rules around curfew or limit your teen's access to certain places or people.

### 6. Offer support

Let your teen know that you're there to support them, no matter what. Encourage them to come to you if they have questions or concerns. Offer to help them find resources, such as counseling or support groups, if they need it.

### 7. Help them find Naloxone

Naloxone can reverse an opioid overdose. The teens around you may already know what naloxone is, but they may not carry it yet. Let teens know that naloxone is legal for ALL ages without a ID. They can get free naloxone, privately, with either of these methods:

**OPTION ONE:** Confidentially ordering online to have naloxone mailed to any address. Naloxone will come in plain packaging for privacy.

**OPTION TWO:** Picking up naloxone from a local provider. For a list of locations that provide free naloxone, visit [LacedandLethal.com](http://LacedandLethal.com).

Providers may ask general questions about age and gender, but the identity of anyone asking for naloxone will be completely confidential. When picking up naloxone, teens are welcome to ask any questions they may have and receive naloxone training, if they'd like it.

While it's not made specifically for teens, [StopOverdose.org](http://StopOverdose.org) is another great resource for overdose prevention information.

### 8. Remind them to seek help if they witness an overdose

Impress upon teens the importance of calling 911 after administering naloxone. Remind teens of the Good Samaritan law: *If you seek medical assistance in a drug-related overdose, you and the victim cannot be prosecuted for drug possession.*