



Fentanyl Awareness

We have seen an alarming rise in fentanyl-overdose deaths among students of all ages across the country. Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine, can be found in many forms, including pills, powder, and blocks that resemble sidewalk chalk or candy. The DEA has recently identified a new type of brightly colored “rainbow fentanyl” believed to be targeted at young children.

The increase in student deaths highlights the need for awareness among parents, students, faculty, and teachers. We have gathered some useful resources to help talk to your child or student and how you can help.

How to talk to your child and or students about fentanyl

- Start a conversation: Have a general discussion about pain, stress, and medications. Explain that pain and stress are a normal part of life and suggest that your child can speak with a healthcare professional on ways to better manage them. Explain what fentanyl is and why it is so dangerous: Fentanyl is a powerful opioid. It’s tasteless and odorless, and an amount about the size of two grains of salt can cause an overdose. It is often mixed into powders and counterfeit pills.
- If you know, or strongly suspect, your child or student is using opioids: Focus the conversation on safety and drug use. Talk about how you, as a parent or caregiver, want them to be safe instead of focusing on punishment for drug use.

Recognize the signs of an opioid overdose. Look for:

- Small, constricted “pinpoint pupils.”
- Falling asleep or losing consciousness.
- Slow, weak, or no breathing.
- Choking or gurgling sounds.
- Limp body.
- Cold and/or clammy skin.
- Discolored skin (especially on lips and nails).

If you suspect an overdose:

- Call 911 immediately.
- Administer naloxone, if available.
Naloxone can very quickly restore normal breathing for a person whose breathing has slowed down or stopped because of an overdose. Naloxone is safe, easy to get, and easy to use. Ask your healthcare provider or a pharmacist to obtain it.
- Try to keep the person awake and breathing.
- Lay the person on their side to prevent choking.
- Stay with the person until emergency help arrives.

Additional Resources

1. [10 Tips for Talking to Your Children about Opioids](#)
2. [Find Treatment Today](#)
3. [The Facts about Fentanyl](#)
4. [DEA Warns of Brightly-Colored Fentanyl Used to Target Young Americans](#)
5. [Prescription Drugs: Abuse and Addiction*](#)

*Personal advantage login is required