

Facts about fentanyl

- Fentanyl has harmed far too many people in Washington state in recent years.
- Fentanyl is massively strong—as much as 50 times stronger than heroin. An amount as small as 2 grains of salt can cause an overdose.
- It's hard to know if fentanyl is in your drug. You can't taste it. You can't smell it. And it doesn't always look the same.
- Fentanyl can be mixed into other drugs like pills, meth, cocaine or molly. People who make or sell drugs often mix it in to make the drug stronger at less cost to them.
- Even if you trust your supplier, you don't know who handled the drug before they did. Drugs change hands many times before they get to you.
- Fentanyl can be clumpy. That means a pill or line may have no fentanyl but another from the same batch may have a dangerous amount.
- When people make or sell drugs and mix in fentanyl, it doesn't spread evenly throughout the batch.

Why harm reduction?

- We talk about harm reduction because it works.
- Data tells us the young people most at risk of overdose usually use drugs often and use multiple substances when they do. For many in this group, prevention messaging won't resonate.
- It is important to emphasize to youth that the safest route is to not use criminalized drugs at all. It's only safe to use drugs your healthcare provider appropriately prescribed.
- We also know many parents and teachers feel most comfortable with abstinence messages, but harm-reduction is a tried-and-true public health strategy that saves lives.

Harm reduction messaging

- If you see an overdose, call 911 and say the person is unresponsive and not breathing. You could save a life. Washington's Good Samaritan Law means you and the person who overdosed are protected from drug possession charges. According to Washington law:
 - If you need help with a drug-related overdose, you and the person who overdosed won't be charged with drug possession (RCW 69.50.315). The law still applies even if the person dies from the overdose.
 - Anyone can get, carry, and administer naloxone (RCW 69.41.095).
- Carry naloxone and know how to use it.
 - Naloxone (Narcan) is a medication that reverses opioid overdoses. It's easy to administer and available as a nasal spray or injection.
 - If you don't know what somebody took, you can still use naloxone. It's safe to use, even if you don't have opioids in your body. You and the person who overdosed are covered by the Good Samaritan Law.

- Help your community stay safer. Even if you don't know anyone who uses opioids, carry naloxone and know how to use it.
 - You can get naloxone kits without a prescription at any pharmacy in the state. Medicaid and most private insurance cover most of the cost.
- Use fentanyl test strips.
 - Fentanyl test strips help prevent overdoses. Use a strip to see if fentanyl is in your drugs. They're easy to use:
 - Mix your drugs with water.
 - Place the strip in the drug/water mix.
 - Read the results.