Fentanyl overdose is now the Number 1 cause of death among Americans ages 18 to 45. Across the U.S., there has been an increase in pills made illegally and marked as other pills such as Adderall, Xanax, or to look like prescribed pills, and they are laced with fentanyl. These fake pills are easily accessible and often marketed and sold through social media channels, making them one of the main contributors for fentanyl deaths among teens/young adults doubling since 2018.

Six out of ten counterfeit pills seized in 2022 contain a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that’s 50-100x more powerful than other opioids. Opioids include pain medications such as Percocet, synthetic opioid such as fentanyl, and illegal opioids such as heroin. It’s often added to illegally manufactured drugs because it’s cheaper, more addictive and more dangerous.

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What you need to know

Know the Signs of Drug Use
SIGNING OF AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

Physically and verbally unresponsive
Pinpoint pupils
Blueish lips or fingertips
Vomiting, gurgling, or making choking noises
Slow breathing, respiration, or heartbeat

If You Suspect an Opioid Overdose

Every second counts. Call 911.
Administer Naloxone (Narcan).

Today, emergency responders carry Naloxone to help reverse the effects of an overdose. If you suspect an overdose, call 911 immediately.
What Can Parents and Caregivers Do?

- Talk to your children about the dangers of illegal drugs.
- Talk to your children about the risks of sharing medications not prescribed to them. Do not keep unnecessary medications in your cabinets.
- Ask your child's healthcare professionals for non-opioid alternatives for surgical procedures and injuries.
- Recognize the signs of an opioid overdose.
- Carry naloxone and discuss Fentanyl Test Strips (FTS).
- Look for signs of opioid use and/or emoji drug codes on texts and social media:

Tips for talking to youth as Parents and Caregivers

- Encourage open and honest communication.
- Understand that even though they may not be using substances, they may know someone who is.
- Offer judgment-free information about the risks of Fentanyl and illegal drugs. Offer statistics or facts, not opinions.
- Start the conversation in a neutral location - go on a walk or a drive.
- Create an “exit plan” to prepare them if they're pressured to take a pill or use drugs.
- Educate them on how to access and administer naloxone (NARCAN) and/or pre-test substances for fentanyl with Fentanyl Test Strips (FTS).

Sources: