

COMMUNIQUÉ

Please share with your Health Care Provider colleagues

To: Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Health Care Providers, Hospital Emergency Departments, EMS, and Law Enforcement
From: Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health for the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit
Date: May 20, 2016
Re: **Synthetic Fentanyl in Lanark, Leeds, Grenville**

Synthetic grade Fentanyl has been found in several cities in Ontario, including Ottawa and Kingston, and is also likely to be in the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville area.

Synthetic grade Fentanyl is a powdered form of Fentanyl with 100 % purity. It is typically pressed into pills and has been known to be sold as OxyContin or Heroin elsewhere in the province.

Synthetic Fentanyl has the potential to be more fatal than the transdermal patches because; 1) a small amount can be fatal -as little as 2 grains of salt; and 2) people may not be aware that they are consuming it as it can be disguised as other drugs.

The signs and symptoms of a synthetic Fentanyl overdose are the same as that of other opioids:

- Breathing is very slow, erratic or not at all
- Fingernails and/ or lips turn blue
- Body is limp
- Unconscious
- Deep snoring or gurgling
- Pin point pupils
- Vomiting

Where possible, please provide the following information to individuals you know who are using or who are at risk of using synthetic Fentanyl:

- 1) Synthetic Fentanyl appears to be sold as a white powder in vials or pill bottles.
- 2) Fentanyl is 100 times more toxic than morphine.
- 3) Synthetic Fentanyl may be more fatal due to the purity.
- 4) Synthetic Fentanyl may be sold as other opioids.
- 5) Don't mix Fentanyl with any other opioid, benzodiazepines or alcohol.
- 6) Use smaller amounts of Fentanyl if there has been a period of non-use of more than 2-3 days.
- 7) If Fentanyl is a new drug or form of the drug, then the risk is lowered if smaller amounts are used.
- 8) Don't use Fentanyl alone.
- 9) Call 911 if an overdose occurs and administer naloxone if a kit is available. (Kits are available at the Health Unit.)

If you have any questions, or would like more information about Harm Reduction and the services available in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark, please do not hesitate to contact Jennifer Adams, Harm Reduction PHN Coordinator at jennifer.adams@healthunit.org or 613-283-2740, ext. 2415.