



Fentanyl Warning Increased Overdose Deaths Reported in King County

Molina Healthcare wants to alert our provider partners to a recent increase in overdose deaths in King County, largely due to fentanyl found in illicit pills and powders. According to the health department, these deaths are occurring more frequently among people 18 or younger.

Please be aware of the danger and discuss this information with your patients.

WARNING

- Beware of counterfeit pills that may look like prescription drugs. They likely contain fentanyl.
- Do not consume any pill that you do not directly receive from a pharmacy or your prescriber.
- Pills purchased online are not safe.

What is fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid drug, approximately 100 times more powerful than other opioids. It is often added to illicit street drugs, such as fake pills and white powder. Fentanyl and other opioids cause overdose by slowing breathing, and can cause death.

Where has fentanyl shown up locally?

- In King County, fentanyl is most commonly seen in blue, greenish, or pale colored counterfeit pills. There may be other colors. These pills may be marked as “M30,” “K9,” “215,” or “v48.” Fentanyl may also be in white powders.
- Oxycodone pills that are sold on the street or online likely contain fentanyl.
- You can’t smell or taste fentanyl. You cannot tell if a pill contains fentanyl just by looking at it.
- The amount of fentanyl can vary between pills, even within the same batch. While a single pill might get a person high without killing them, another pill could be fatal.

How to prevent fatal overdoses:

- Know the signs of an overdose or excessive opioid use. Someone may be overdosing if they:
 - Have extreme drowsiness, won’t wake up or it’s difficult to awaken them
 - Have slow or no breathing
 - Have pale, ashy, cool skin
 - Have blue lips or fingernails
- If you witness an overdose, call 911 immediately. Washington State’s Good Samaritan law will protect you and the person who is overdosing from drug possession charges.

Give naloxone (Narcan), a nasal spray that counteracts the life-threatening effects of an opioid overdose. Find out where you can get Narcan at stopoverdose.org.

Treatment works

Many different treatment options are available across King County, including medications to treat opioid use disorder. Visit the Washington Recovery Help Line at WArecoveryhelpline.org or call (866) 789-1511, TTY 711.