

## **WARNING - Fentanyl in First Nations Communities**



Fentanyl has been detected in illicit-drug deaths throughout BC, with the largest numbers of deaths in Vancouver, **Nanaimo**, Surrey, Maple Ridge, Prince George, Langley and Fort St. John.

Over the past three years, there has been a progressive increase in the number of illicit drug overdose deaths in First Nations Communities in which fentanyl was detected, either alone or in combination with other drugs. The BC Coroners Service reports that in BC there were over 300 illicit drug overdose deaths in 2014.

### **Fentanyl is being sold in:**

- pill form sold as fake oxy's and other club drugs
- powder form sold as heroin or fent
- powder form mixed into other drugs like cocaine, crystal meth and others

## **What advice do you have for people who may unknowingly have taken drugs containing fentanyl?**

***While we advise against using illicit drugs, people who do choose to use should be sure to:***

- never use alone
- start with a small amount
- do not mix substances, including alcohol, as it increases risk of overdose
- call 911 right away if they think someone is overdosing
- make a plan and know how to respond in case of an overdose
- use where help is easily available
- be prepared to give breaths and/or administer naloxone (Narcan) until help arrives

Caution should be used when handling fentanyl, as it can be absorbed through the skin or mucous membranes. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth if you get any on your skin — even small quantities absorbed this way can lead to death.

### Early signs of a fentanyl overdose include:

- severe sleepiness
- slow heartbeat
- slow, shallow breathing or snoring
- trouble breathing
- cold, clammy skin
- trouble walking or talking



## KNOW YOUR SOURCE?

Fentanyl may be hiding in the drugs you're using. You won't see it, smell it or taste it, but it can kill you.

BE DRUG SMART. Don't use alone. Start with a small amount. Learn about [naloxone](#).

Naloxone, or Narcan<sup>®</sup> is an antidote to opioid overdose. Taking too much of opioid drugs (like morphine, heroin, methadone, oxycodone, and fentanyl) can make breathing slow down or stop. Naloxone reverses this, restoring normal breathing and consciousness.

Giving naloxone can prevent death or brain damage from lack of oxygen during an opioid overdose. It does not work for non-opioid overdoses (like cocaine, ecstasy, GHB or alcohol)

More information at [www.towardstheheart.com](http://www.towardstheheart.com)