



DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



January 22, 2020  
Fentanyl Overdose Risk Health Alert

Dear Parents:

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This letter is to inform you about the increased availability of fentanyl as an ongoing threat to public health and safety. In 2019, there were 13 fentanyl-related overdose deaths in Marin County, more than all prior years combined. Similar increases are being seen regionally.

Fentanyl is an opioid drug that is 80 to 100 times more potent than morphine and 40 to 50 times more potent than heroin. Some fentanyl overdoses occur among people who are aware that they are using fentanyl. However, an increasing number of fentanyl overdoses occur among persons using other substances, including cocaine, methamphetamine and counterfeit pills resembling Percocet, Xanax and others.

Overdose victims may have been unaware of the emergence of fentanyl-laced compounds in the Bay Area drug supply and of the powerful potency of fentanyl. In Marin County, most people who died from fentanyl overdoses had ingested multiple substances. Alcohol, cannabis, stimulants and other sedatives are commonly found in toxicology reports related to fentanyl overdose.



Counterfeit Percocet containing fentanyl

#### How You Can Help

1. Talk with your children and alert them to the current risk. Remind them to only take pharmaceutical pills prescribed by their physician, and only take them as directed. Do not share or sell medicines and do not buy medications not prescribed to them. When in doubt about a pharmaceutical, reach out and ask your doctor.

2. If you think a loved one is experiencing challenges with substance misuse and abuse contact the 24/7 Mental Health and Substance Use Access and Assessment Hotline (888-818-1115). Additional resources in different languages can be found at [www.MarinHHS.org/Substance-Use-Services](http://www.MarinHHS.org/Substance-Use-Services).

3. Clean out your medicine cabinet regularly. Dispose of unused and expired medications at one of Marin County's safe disposal locations. Visit [www.RxSafeMarin.org](http://www.RxSafeMarin.org) to find a location near you.

4. If you're concerned someone in your life may be at risk for an opioid overdose, carry the overdose reversal medication naloxone (Narcan). Narcan is available without a physician prescription at most pharmacies in Marin. In the next couple of months RxSafe Marin will be hosting free community naloxone trainings. Email [RxSafeMarin@gmail.com](mailto:RxSafeMarin@gmail.com) for training updates.

Thank you for joining us to protect our community.

Sincerely,

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