

Dangers of Synthetic Drugs

The illicit use and abuse of synthetic drugs represent an emerging and ongoing public health threat in California. The fentanyl crisis specifically has impacted communities across the state, leading to a sharp increase in fentanyl poisonings and deaths in recent years.

This notice aims to address the crisis with a preventative approach ensuring students and families are educated on the deadly consequences of recreational drug use.

A synthetic drug is a drug with properties and effects similar to a known hallucinogen or narcotic but having a slightly altered chemical structure, especially such a drug created to evade existing restrictions against illegal substances.

Synthetic drugs include but are not limited to synthetic cannabinoids (synthetic marijuana, spice, K2), methamphetamines, bath salts, and fentanyl.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has expounded on the extreme danger of drugs laced with fentanyl. Illicit fentanyl can be added to other drugs to make them cheaper, more powerful, and more addictive. Illicit fentanyl has been found in many drugs, including heroin, methamphetamine, counterfeit pills, and cocaine. Fentanyl mixed with any drug increases the likelihood of a fatal overdose. Furthermore, it is nearly impossible to tell if drugs have been laced with fentanyl without additional testing, because fentanyl cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted when used as a lacing agent. More information can be found her: [CAN BE FOUND HERE](#). (HYPERLINK TO THE CDPH WEBPAGE ON FENTANYL.)

What Is an Opioid?

Opioids are a class of drug used to treat pain. Some examples of opioids are fentanyl, morphine, oxycodone, hydrocodone, and codeine.

Opioids are very effective for certain conditions while under the supervision of medical doctor, but they also carry high addiction potential and sometimes result in overdose.

What is Fentanyl and Why is It Dangerous?

Opioids can be used illegally. In addition to prescription opioids (mentioned above), there are also illicit “street opioids” that can place people at high risk for overdose. Examples of these types of “street opioids” are heroin and illicitly manufactured fentanyl compounds.

Illegal fentanyl is many times stronger than morphine and is implicated in a large percentage of opioid related deaths worldwide, especially when combined with other opioids, alcohol, or sedative medications such as alprazolam (Xanax), lorazepam (Ativan) and clonazepam (Klonopin).

Opioids cause death by suppressing respiratory function (breathing).

Often illicit fentanyl is disguised and made to look like other prescription drugs that people obtain illegally.

When a person does not know what they are taking, or they have a low tolerance for opioids, they can stop breathing.

Even small amounts for “street fentanyl” can be fatal and people who buy pills or other powdered drugs illicitly place themselves at high risk of overdose.

How to Get Help

If a person encounters someone that is suspected of overdose, immediately call 911.

If someone you know uses opioids, carrying naloxone can be a life saving measure.

The Charter School maintains a policy on naloxone administration. Contact the school office at 805-492-3569 for more information.