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Know the Dangers of Fentanyl

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Did you know that fentanyl overdose deaths are on the rise in San Joaquin County? Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Fentanyl-laced drugs and fake prescription pills containing fentanyl are available online and in our communities. People often **don't know** that they are taking fentanyl or how much fentanyl a drug contains.

Even in small doses, fentanyl can be deadly.

Too many San Joaquin County residents, including teens, have suffered from overdoses of fentanyl or other synthetic opioids. As part of a collaboration of education, law enforcement, public health, and other organizations, we are coming together to say that **enough is enough**. We need your help to keep youth safe from this dangerous drug. You can help by getting informed and **talking to your student about the dangers of fentanyl and drug use**.

- Just a few grains of fentanyl can be a lethal dose.
- Prescription fentanyl is a powerful medical synthetic opioid prescribed in carefully monitored dosage for extreme pain or end-of-life care.
- Counterfeit pills, obtained on the street or online, can contain deadly doses of fentanyl. They are made to resemble other prescription medications, such as OxyContin, Percocet, Vicodin, Xanax, or Adderall. They are available to anyone with a smartphone.
- In San Joaquin County, fentanyl-related overdose deaths among teens ages 15 to 19 increased by 300% between early 2020 and the first half of 2021. This age group has the second-highest rate of emergency department visits for fentanyl-related overdoses when compared to all other age groups, according to the most-recent data available.
- Providing drugs causing a fatal overdose may result in criminal prosecution.
- Signs of a fentanyl overdose include difficulty waking up, slowed breathing, confusion, and blue or pale lips and fingernails.
- If you think someone is overdosing, call 911 immediately. (Under state law, a person overdosing and the person calling for help are protected from legal trouble.) If available, administer Nalaxone, a life-saving medication to reverse the effects of opioid overdose. It is available free to the public at [San Joaquin County Public Health Services](https://www.sjcopioidsafety.org).



Fatal dose of fentanyl.

The lethal potency of fentanyl and its easy availability increases the already risky behavior of recreational drug use. There is no such thing as a safe street drug, and it is dangerous to misuse prescription drugs. Be aware. Be informed. Be safe. Learn more about opioid use, where to get help, and the Fentanyl is Forever awareness campaign at www.SJCopioidsafety.org.

Sincerely,

District Superintendent