



OVERDOSE ALERT



6/9/2023 | Washington County

Please share this alert and messages with your networks, family, and friends.

Washington County Health and Human Services Department is issuing an overdose alert because of a significant increase in serious overdoses and deaths. The Washington County Sheriff's Office has responded to at least 15 overdoses, including four fatalities in the last few days. They issued this alert, warning the public that there may be a dangerous supply of fentanyl-containing drugs circulating in our area.

If you or someone you know is using drugs, there is a higher risk for overdose. Assume anything not given by a pharmacy or your medical provider is fake and could contain a fatal dose of fentanyl or another potentially fatal drug. Know the signs of overdose, don't use alone and use the overdose reversal drug, naloxone.

SIGNS OF OVERDOSE INCLUDE:

- Difficult or unable to wake up
- Slow or no breathing
- Bluish or pale lips and fingernails
- Pale or clammy skin
- Abnormal snoring or breathing sounds
- Vomiting or foaming at the mouth

If someone is unconscious or has any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

What is fentanyl? Pharmaceutical fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid prescribed for severe pain and anesthesia, but fentanyl is also illegally manufactured and distributed in the community. Fentanyl is tasteless, odorless and a tiny amount can kill. It can be sold in many colors and forms including pills, powder, and chalk-like blocks.

Overdose is a medical emergency! Opioids and fentanyl can cause breathing to slow or stop. This decreases the amount of oxygen that reaches the brain. If not treated immediately, an overdose can result in organ failure and death. Overdoses can occur within a few minutes to over a couple hours.

What you can do to reduce overdose risk if you or someone you know uses drugs:

- Carry naloxone (name brand "Narcan"). Naloxone is a safe medicine that reverses the effects of opioids and can prevent death when someone overdoses. Oregon's Good Samaritan Law protects the person who administers naloxone and the person who is overdosing from prosecution. Naloxone is available at local pharmacies. You do not need a prescription or any identification to buy it.



- Don't use alone. Have someone with you so they can help if you overdose. If you lose consciousness, you will not be able to call for help.
- Don't trust your drug tolerance. Drug content and potency is not predictable, even within the same batch. Even people who have a high tolerance for opioids face an increased risk of death because of the inconsistency in the drug supply. Always go slow and do a test amount.
- Avoid mixing drugs. Mixing drugs increases the overdose risk. Opioids, alcohol, and benzodiazepines (Xanax, Valium etc.) slow breathing.

If you or someone you care about is struggling with drug or alcohol use and are looking for help:

- Washington County Crisis Line: 503-291-9111
- Call the Alcohol & Drug Help Line: 1-800-923-4357
- Washington County substance use disorder treatment and peer services providers are listed on our website.
- Connect with Washington County harm reduction services, which distributes Naloxone to people who use drugs.
- Oregon Health Authority information on opioids and treatment resources.

We thank the sheriff's office, Westside Interagency Narcotics Team, and our city police departments for their incredible response to overdoses in our community and their willingness to carry Naloxone, which has saved so many lives. We are also so grateful for the many community members and organizations who have joined in this effort and for the willingness of our residents to carry and administer naloxone has had a crucial role in decreasing the numbers of fatalities in our county.

