



***** MEDIA RELEASE *****

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October 22nd, 2019

Community Alert - Suspected Fentanyl Overdoses

Over the last week, Monterey Peninsula law enforcement agencies have been dispatched to an increasing number of calls related to overdoses of counterfeit drugs suspected of containing fentanyl. Since Friday, October 18, 2019, the past several days, law enforcement has been made aware of five overdoses on the peninsula. It is suspected there are additional unreported overdoses.

In one extremely tragic instance a juvenile female died. On that incident, which occurred on October 18, 2019, Seaside public safety personnel responded to a call of a female juvenile who was unconscious and not breathing. First responders arrived on scene and began providing medical aid. The juvenile was transported to CHOMP where she was pronounced deceased. It was later determined the juvenile ingested an unknown pill prior to losing consciousness.

In some of the reported overdose instances, individuals related taking what they believed were 30 mg oxycodone or Percocet pills. On September 30, 2019, Monterey County issued a press release regarding similar pills being found to contain fentanyl. A copy of Monterey County's press release is attached. Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opiate which can cause respiratory distress and death. Fentanyl is odorless and tasteless and law enforcement is beginning to see it laced into other drugs to increase potency.



Counterfeit pills containing fentanyl

If an overdose is suspected, 911 should be called immediately to obtain medical assistance.

Public Safety and medical personnel view this issue as a grave danger and while parents should discuss this with their teenaged children, everyone should be talking about this issue with their loved ones to ensure people understand the danger of taking non-prescribed medications. While this media release focuses on potential counterfeit pills as pictured above, there is severe danger in taking any prescription medication that has not been prescribed to that individual and obtained from a legitimate pharmacy. Counterfeit pills could look like the ones pictured above or other medications.

In addition to this public safety advisory, Law enforcement is actively investigating the criminal aspect of selling/providing the counterfeit pills. PRVNT is assisting in the investigation of these overdoses and anyone with information is encouraged to call investigators at 831-646-6926 or if you wish to remain anonymous contact the Tip-Line at 831-646-3840.

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For Immediate Release

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News & Information

Increase in Overdoses Due to Counterfeit Drugs Contaminated with Fentanyl

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Monterey County Health Officials have received reports indicating a recent increase in overdoses and deaths related to use of counterfeit drugs containing fentanyl. In some instances, individuals believed they were taking 30 mg oxycodone or Percocet pills. The counterfeit pills look very similar to the pharmaceutically manufactured version and cannot easily be distinguished from legitimate pills. They are circular in shape, light blue to light green in color, and have an “M” inside a square stamped on one side and a “30” stamped on the other side (see photo below). Law enforcement and health care providers also increasingly report the presence of fentanyl in other counterfeit drugs and in heroin, methamphetamine, powder cocaine, and marijuana.



What You Can Do to Stay Safe

- If you are in possession of oxycodone or Percocet pills that were not prescribed to you or were obtained from anywhere other than a pharmacy, [dispose of them at free take-back locations](#);
- Never use street-purchased drugs alone or behind a locked door.
- Don't rely on look or smell to determine if a drug is safe. Fentanyl is colorless and odorless.
- If possible, test a small amount prior to using.
- Always carry naloxone and know how to use it. Encourage your friends to do the same.
- Call 9-1-1 if an overdose is suspected.
- Talk to your doctor about ways you can reduce use.

For More Information

- Visit the Prescribe Safe Monterey County website: <https://www.montagehealth.org/montage-health/prescribe-safe/#.XYjePaZYaUk>.
- Contact the Monterey County Health Department's Behavioral Health Bureau at (888) 258-6029 to speak with a team member who can connect you with substance abuse community resources.

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