

## OPIOID DISCUSSION SHEET FOR PARENTS

The teen years are a time of major changes- both physically and emotionally. Although every parent's goal is to keep their child safe, we know that youth are exposed to many adult issues like alcohol and drug use. Recently, Ottawa Public Health and Ottawa Police Services have been made aware of counterfeit or 'bootleg' drugs found in Ottawa that have been involved in recent life-threatening overdoses and death. Counterfeit pills can be made to look almost the same as prescription drugs. To help you as a parent, we have prepared:

- Information about opioid drugs
- Tips on how to discuss drug-use and mental health with your youth
- A list of local resources

### What are opioids, Fentanyl and Carfentanil?

**Opioids** are a family of drugs used to treat pain. All opioid drugs can be dangerous. They need to be taken only as prescribed by a medical professional. Overdose of opioids can result in death because breathing stops. **Fentanyl** is an opioid that is usually prescribed for severe pain such as cancer. Fentanyl is about 50 to 100 times more toxic than morphine. **Non-prescription** or **bootleg fentanyl** is much more toxic than the prescription version, as the production is not controlled. **Carfentanil** is an opioid used for large animals like elephants and it is not for human use. It has been found mixed into other street drugs in Ontario.

### What is Naloxone?

**Naloxone** is a medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of an overdose related to an opioid such as fentanyl, heroin and morphine. Always call 911 if you suspect an overdose. Take-home Naloxone kits and training are available free of charge and without a prescription for anyone who can intervene in an overdose. Naloxone kits are available at many pharmacies across Ottawa ([list of participating pharmacies](#)). Call your pharmacy ahead of time to make sure a Naloxone kit is available

### What do I need to know?

- You are your kid's first line of defense against drugs. Start the conversation.
- A small amount of fentanyl can be fatal.
- Most teens think prescription drugs are less harmful than street drugs. All opioids, (prescription or illicit/bootleg) have a risk of overdose.
- Know the signs and symptoms of an overdose.
- Anyone who uses drugs can be at risk for overdose. Learn how to prevent, recognize and respond to an overdose and where Naloxone kits can be accessed in the community at [www.StopOverdoseOttawa.ca](http://www.StopOverdoseOttawa.ca)
- Lock up all medications and check regularly. Return unused medications to your pharmacy. If your child has an injury or pain issue, speak to your doctor, dentist or pharmacist about the risks of different pain medications, monitor their usage and take back unused medications.

## How to talk to youth about drugs

- Look for opportunities to start the conversation. Speaking to your kids about drugs will not make them want to try drugs.
- Focus on facts. Plan the main points you want to discuss.
- Ask them about what they know about drugs. What are their questions, concerns or worries?
- Listen to them and respect their opinions.
- Give them room to participate, ask questions, and avoid being judgmental.
- Respect their independence. Let them know that your main concern is their safety and well-being. Reassure them that you are there to support them and are here to listen.
- Know that kids do experiment and that mistakes happen. Help them reflect on a mistake and turn it into a learning opportunity.

## More Information on how to talk about drugs

- Health Canada: [Talking with teenagers about drugs](#)
- Drug Free Kids Canada: [Tips for Parents](#)
- Healthy Families BC: [Tricky Conversations](#)
- Vancouver Coastal Health: [Tips for Talking to Youth](#)
- Parenting in Ottawa (by Ottawa Public Health): [Mental Health and Youth](#)

## Local Mental Health and Addiction Resources

- **Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services** [www.rideauwood.org](http://www.rideauwood.org)  
Contact your school or Rideauwood Intake: 613-724-4881
- **Maison Fraternité** [www.maisonfraternite.ca](http://www.maisonfraternite.ca) (French only)
- **Dave Smith Youth Treatment Centre** [www.davesmithcentre.org](http://www.davesmithcentre.org)
- **Youth Services Bureau** [www.ysb.on.ca](http://www.ysb.on.ca)
- **Parents' Lifelines of Eastern Ontario**: 613-321-3211 or [www.pleo.on.ca](http://www.pleo.on.ca)
- **The Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health** (First Nation, Inuit and Métis) [www.wabano.com](http://www.wabano.com)
- **Local Community Health and Resource Centres** many programs and services for youth and families: [www.coalitionottawa.ca](http://www.coalitionottawa.ca)
- The Royal's Regional Opioid Intervention Service: [www.theroyal.ca](http://www.theroyal.ca)

## What is Ottawa Public Health's role?

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) works with all Ottawa schools to provide support, education, programming, and resources on mental health and substance misuse. This includes the Ottawa school-based substance abuse counselling program. We help to raise awareness on overdose prevention both in schools and in the community, including where to access Naloxone for people who need to respond to an overdose. Along with members of the Ottawa Overdose Prevention and Response Task Force, including local hospitals, first responders and the Regional Coroner's Office, OPH collaborates to monitor local data about overdoses. OPH does not provide treatment and addiction services.

## Do you have more questions?

- Go to [www.StopOverdoseOttawa.ca](http://www.StopOverdoseOttawa.ca) to find out more about drugs, signs and symptoms of an overdose and Naloxone access in the community
- Connect with a Public Health Nurse and other parents on **Facebook** ([www.facebook.com/ParentinginOttawa](https://www.facebook.com/ParentinginOttawa)) or **email** [ParentinginOttawa@ottawa.ca](mailto:ParentinginOttawa@ottawa.ca)
- Visit the Parenting in Ottawa website [www.ParentinginOttawa.ca/StopOverdose](http://www.ParentinginOttawa.ca/StopOverdose)
- Call 613-PARENTS (613-727-3687) to speak with a Public Health Nurse Monday to Friday from 9 am to 4 pm