

Law enforcement agencies across the U.S. have issued warnings regarding the dangers of Fentanyl. While seen on a national scale, this dangerous opioid is making its way to rural counties like ours. The misuse and abuse of opioids, or any prescription medication, is already cause for concern. Still, there has been a rise in the prevalence of counterfeit Percocet and Oxycodone/oxycotin, and brightly-colored Fentanyl is easily mistaken for candy.

What is Fentanyl?

According to the California Department of Public Health:

Brightly-colored Fentanyl (rainbow fentanyl) has been identified as a new trend according to the United States (U.S.) Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) [1]. Rainbow fentanyl can be found in many forms, including pills, powder, and blocks resembling sidewalk chalk or candy. Any pill (regardless of its color, shape, or size) that does not come from a health care provider or pharmacist can contain Fentanyl and can be deadly.

[Fentanyl](#) is 80-100 times more potent than morphine and 40-50 times more potent than heroin and, as a result, is a major cause of overdose for unsuspecting individuals.[2]

According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard [3]:

- Emergency department visits related to non-fatal opioid overdoses in California's youth ages 10-19 years more than tripled from 2018 (379 total) to 2020 (1,222 total).
- Opioid-related overdose deaths in California's youth ages 10-19 years increased from 2018 (54 total) to 2020 (274 total), marking a 407 percent increase over two years, primarily driven by Fentanyl.
- Fentanyl-related overdose deaths in California's youth ages 10-19 years increased from 2018 (36 total) to 2020 (261 total), a 625 percent increase.

People purchasing these pills are likely unaware that they contain Fentanyl.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Speak with your student about this information so they know the risks of buying or sharing prescription medication and that these pills are out there. [Share photos of the new colored Fentanyl](#) (also know as "rainbow fentanyl") that are being used to target youth.

1. If you're concerned someone in your life is at risk for opioid overdose, carry the overdose reversal medication **naloxone (Narcan)**. Narcan has no adverse side

effects and is available without a physician's prescription at most pharmacies in Marin. Each Chico Unified school is equipped with Narcan in its main office.

2. If you find **any** pills (images of pharmaceutical Percocet and Oxycodone can be viewed here: [Percocet](#) and [Oxycodone](#), for reference), **do not touch them**. Call local law enforcement for removal.
3. Call local law enforcement if you or your student have seen these pills. Speaking up may save a friend's life!
4. Contact the 24/7 Mental Health & Substance Use Access & Assessment Hotline (888-818-1115) to get help for a friend or loved one struggling with substance abuse.

We know these are hard conversations to have, but help is available. Club Live on secondary school sites helps educate students about the dangers of drug use. If you or your student need help or wish to learn more about substance abuse, please get in touch with your child's counselor. The Butte County Behavioral Health Department offers substance abuse disorder services in Chico:

<https://www.buttecounty.net/behavioralhealth/substance-use/chico> for adults and youth.

Additional Parent Resources

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration launched a One Pill Can Kill Campaign. View their parent resource links below:

- [Fentanyl Poisoning Resources for Parents](#)
- [How Teens Misuse Medicine](#)
- [Drug Overdoses Killed a Record Number of Americans](#)
- [Buying Drugs Online – What You Should Know & How to Protect Your Kids](#)
- [10 Strategies to Prevent Your Young Person from Using Drugs](#)
- [Severe Opioid Overdoses Rose by Nearly a Third During Pandemic](#)
- [Growing Up Drug Free - a Parent's Guide to Prevention](#)

References:

[1] Drug Enforcement Agency. DEA Warns of Brightly-Colored Fentanyl Used to Target Young Americans.

<https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2022/08/30/dea-warns-brightly-colored-fentanyl-use-d-targetyoung-americans> (Last Updated: August 2022)

[2] CDPH. What is Fentanyl?

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDCPHP/sapb/Pages/Fentanyl.aspx> (Last Updated: August 2022)

[3] CDPH. California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard
<https://skylab.cdph.ca.gov/ODdash/> (Last Updated: July 2022)