



TALK TO TEENS ABOUT FENTANYL

Most teens say they trust their parents or caregivers more than anyone when it comes to information and advice about drugs. Talk to the teens in your life about how experimenting with drugs can hurt them and their future. Because to them, you're the expert.

WHAT TO KNOW

Teens are looking to trusted adults for facts about fentanyl and fake pills.

Here are some basics:

- Fentanyl is a powerful, fast-acting opioid used to manage pain.
- It has no unique look, taste, or smell to identify it.
- Regulated (legal) fentanyl is used in medical settings.
- Unregulated (illicit) fentanyl is sold on the streets in pill or powder form.
- Illicit fentanyl is unpredictable. Any amount can be enough to cause overdose or death.
- People have died from fentanyl poisoning thinking they took Adderall, Percocet, or Xanax.

WHAT TO DO

- Pick a time and a place where you can both focus.
Think car rides, mealtimes, and other everyday moments.
- Ask open-ended questions and really listen.
- Stay calm and non-judgemental.
- Avoid scare tactics. They don't work.
- Tell them how much you care.
- Keep the conversation going.
Several short conversations work better than one "Big Talk."



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WHAT TO SAY

“Have you heard about a drug called fentanyl? What have you heard?”

Why: You can learn what they've heard and share what you know.

“I know pills might seem safe to take from your friend — or even a grown-up — but some can cause overdose or death.”

Why: You can outline the real risks of fake pills and set expectations about only taking medication prescribed to them.

“I read an article/saw a video/heard a report about fentanyl and wanted to talk with you about it.”

Why: Timely news lets you share information and talk about how you're feeling.

“If you ever have questions about fentanyl — or any drug — talk to me. It's my job to help you stay safe and healthy.”

Why: Teens need to know they can come to you with questions, and you'll be there to help.

HOW TO REFUSE DRUGS

Teaching teens refusal skills can help them respond to pressure they may face to try drugs.

- **Send a signal**
Agree on a code the teen can text or call you to come pick them up ASAP.
- **Pass the blame**
“I'd be grounded for life if my parents (caregivers) found out.”
- **Offer an alternative**
“I'd rather get a bite to eat instead.”

- **Make an excuse**
“I can't. I have a huge test tomorrow.”
- **Be honest**
“No, thanks. I'm not interested.”
- **Avoid the situation**
Avoid going places where drugs are likely to be present.

The truth is most teens don't experiment with pills of any kind, so it's perfectly OK not to try them. Friends for life look out for one another and don't pressure each other to take unsafe risks.



Learn more at
WAFriendsForLife.com/talk-to-teens

Washington State
Health Care Authority