DANGERS of Synthetic Drugs

Fentanyl overdose fatalities in America continue to increase, leaving a path of heartbreak, with no sign of stopping in the immediate future.

Our region has been touched more frequently than desired with nearly 40 deaths in North Dakota from drug overdoses since the start of 2014, nine of which were in Grand Forks County. Fentanyl is the most powerful opioid available to doctors and is intended to treat extreme pain and late-stage severe illness.

An illicit form of Fentanyl is finding its way into street drugs, most commonly heroin. This drug is manufactured in covert labs and sold on the street in extremely potent forms—80 to 100 times more potent than morphine—and an amount the size of three grains of salt can kill you. Drug abusers or first-time users may obtain a substance without knowledge of the potency or actual composition. This can quickly lead to respiratory arrest and result in death from overdose.

This is not a drug problem specific to a particular socioeconomic class or age group. Fentanyl is being abused by a wide range of individuals and is easy to obtain through secret channels on the Internet. Often, it is purchased through virtual currency, which is hard to track and detect. Fentanyl can be disguised as other opiates, such as heroin or oxycodone, leaving unfortunate and unaware consumers with extremely powerful and increasingly fatal forms of drugs.

Health officials, school leaders and law enforcement are working together and diligently to inform parents and the public about the extreme dangers associated with Fentanyl.

Drug incidents and overdoses are occurring at an alarming rate. Illicit Fentanyl use has proven to be a serious threat to public health and safety. Stay engaged with your child and watch for signs and symptoms of drug use.

Signs of Use
- Drowsiness or nodding
- Constricted or pinpoint pupils
- Agitation
- Depressed respiration
- Confusion
- Euphoria

Signs of Overdose
- Severe drowsiness and inability to be awaken
- Slow heartbeat
- Seizures
- Respiratory reduction
- Low blood pressure

Parental Advice
- Be involved with your children.
- Get to know your children’s friends and peers.
- Understand what activities they are involved in.
- Have conversations about the risks of abusing prescription, over-the-counter and street drugs.
- Check cellphones. Read text messages and review Internet activity.

This message is brought to you by Altru Health System, Grand Forks and East Grand Forks Public Schools, Grand Forks and East Grand Forks Police Departments, Grand Forks and Polk County Public Health, and UND Health & Wellness.

Slang terms and texting phrases to be aware of
- Fading (slang for the high)
- Fet and Fetty
- Ice cream
- Chinese food
- White 80s
- Phantom 100
- A-215s

ILICIT FENTANYL

altru.org/enrich