

February 9, 2024

Public Health Alert – Fentanyl being sold as counterfeit Hydromorphone

Situation

Northwestern Health Unit has received notice that Fentanyl has been detected in the unregulated drug supply in Manitoba region in an unexpected format: tablets, sold as counterfeit Hydromorphone. A person may be exposed to Fentanyl when using other substances.

The high prevalence of Fentanyl in unregulated drugs is illustrated at the following websites: [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#), [Government of Canada Drug Analysis Service](#).

Issue

There may be increased toxicity in the drug supply in our communities. Fentanyl can lead to an opioid poisoning. Fentanyl is frequently found in samples of both opioid and non-opioid unregulated drugs. Non-narcotic drugs may contain narcotics or other unexpected components. Risk of drug poisoning is high for all methods of drug use.

Awareness is a key overdose prevention step for anyone using any kind of unregulated drug.

Prevention and Harm Reduction Opportunities

Messaging for patients/clients:

- Unregulated drugs are rarely “pure” and are frequently cut (mixed) with other substances you may not be expecting, including fentanyl.
- Don't use alone. Have someone with you, on the phone, or download and use the [Lifeguard app](#) or call NORS 1-888-688-NORS (6677).
- If using with a friend, do not use at the same time. Make sure the other person is OK before you use.
- Carry naloxone and know how to use it – although not effective on all drugs, it is effective on opioids.
- Call 911 if you think someone is experiencing a drug poisoning/overdose! [The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act](#) provides some legal protection to the person calling.
- Counsel on the range of treatment options for opioid use disorder including opioid agonist treatments.



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

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Resources

- [Northwestern Health Unit - Naloxone and Opioid Overdose Prevention](#)
- [Sign up for information and alerts from Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#)

Contact

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