

NEWS RELEASE

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Deadly Opioid Carfentanil Circulating In Ontario

The Health Unit is warning the public that the deadly opioid carfentanil is circulating across Ontario. The Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario has informed Public Health Units of a recent increase in the presence of carfentanil within the province. Preliminary mortality data from the Chief Coroner for Ontario, has also shown an increase in carfentanil-related deaths in the first four months of 2019.

The Health Unit would like to warn individuals who use drugs, including recreational users, of the following:

- If using drugs, have someone available who can call for help.
- If using drugs with a friend, do not use at the exact same time.
- Test by injecting a small amount first, then go slow.
- Call 911 immediately if something doesn't feel right.
- Carry naloxone and know how to respond to an opioid overdose.
- If someone has decreased breathing, call 911 and give naloxone.
- Do not assume your drugs are carfentanil free - any drug could be mixed with a lethal amount of carfentanil.

“Carfentanil cannot be detected by sight, smell or taste, and even the smallest amount, as little as two micrograms of the substance, can be lethal” explained Dr. Jim Chirico, Medical Officer of Health. “If using drugs, please use caution to reduce the risk of overdose.”

Quick Facts

- Carfentanil is significantly more potent than fentanyl. Intentional or unintentional carfentanil use could be associated with increased risk of overdose and death compared with use of fentanyl or other opioids.
- Naloxone kits are available at the Health Unit's North Bay and Parry Sound offices, AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area, and local pharmacies.

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