

The opioid/prescription pain medication epidemic



The opioid/prescription pain medication epidemic is already a very serious and problematic issue in the United States. Now there is an added danger for those who take prescriptions drugs that are not prescribed by a doctor and provided to them by a pharmacy.

Over the last year, there has been a dramatic increase in the production and sale of counterfeit prescription drugs as well as the pill press machines used to make the counterfeit pills. These machines are reaching the US border in record numbers.

The machines being seized today are high-tech machines. These machines are capable of making the counterfeit pills look almost exactly like prescription drugs, but as we know, the pills actually contain something different.

Sometimes the counterfeit drugs are harmless placebo pills, while other times, these fake pills contain drugs such as Fentanyl and now more recently, Carfentanil.

Fentanyl is used for medical purposes to help ease extreme pain for patients in the final stages of diseases and it is up to 100 times more powerful than morphine and 50 times more powerful than heroin. It is the most potent opioid available for medical use. Of course, it should be noted that most of the Fentanyl on the streets today is illegally manufactured and then bought and sold over the internet. It is believed that Prince overdosed accidentally on counterfeit pills that contained Fentanyl.

Carfentanil is a powerful tranquilizer commonly used by zoologists and veterinarians for elephants and other large animals. Carfentanil is an analgesic potency that's 10,000 times

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stronger than morphine and 100 times more potent than fentanyl, according to the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

The dark reality is that adults and youth alike have been severely poisoned by these counterfeit prescription drugs containing Fentanyl, Carfentanil or other life threatening chemicals.

It's happening at such alarming rates the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and local health agencies have issued safety alerts to warn people about counterfeit pills being sold.



It is important to note that these counterfeit drugs are not being sold in pharmacies but rather on the street or online. As we all should know, it's already dangerous to use prescription drugs for any reason except why they were prescribed to you and an overdose can happen even when the pills do contain what they're supposed to so using any drug and/or pill that doesn't come from a medical office, hospital, or pharmacy is especially dangerous. Even if they look like prescription drugs, they could be tainted or fake and that could be deadly.

Remember prescription drugs are designed to cure or alleviate the symptoms of various medical conditions. According to the National Institute of Health, approximately 20 percent of Americans have used prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes. If you believe that you or someone you know may be struggling with prescription drug abuse, you can call and talk with someone.

Listed below are a few National Helplines for substance abuse and addiction.

- **Alcohol & Drug Addiction Resource Center: 800-390-4056**
- **Boys Town National Hotline: 800-448-3000**
- **National Drug Information Treatment and Referral Hotline: 800-662-HELP (4357)**
24/7 information, support, treatment options and referrals to local rehab
- **Alcohol and Drug Abuse Helpline and Treatment: 800-234-0420**

Sources:

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www.safemedicines.org/policymakers.../fentanyl-pills-ravaging-american-communities
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