

# Illegal Opioids: How to Protect Yourself & Others

## Fact Sheet for Patients and Families

**When you take illegal drugs, you don't know what you're getting.** You can't know for sure what's in them or how strong they are.

**Illegal opioids** [OH-pee-oidz] are some of the most dangerous drugs. They can stop your breathing and can kill you.

### What are illegal opioids?

**Opioids** are powerful pain medicines. **Illegal** opioids are drugs made to act like these medicines. They are sometimes called "synthetic" [sin-THET-ik] opioids. These are **street drugs** and used to get "high." Some people make pills that look like prescription opioids and sell them illegally on the street. They are also sold online. It's against the law to sell, buy, share, have, or use illegal opioids.

### Why are illegal opioids so dangerous?

People taking these drugs are likely to get addicted, overdose, or die. With illegal opioids, **there is no way to know what is in them or how strong they might be.** For example:

- **Every dose could be different.** A powder or tablet can change from 1 dose to the next.
- **There can be dangerous "fillers."** There may be unknown ingredients added to the actual drug.
- **These drugs can be much stronger than prescription opioids.** Even a small amount can kill you. For example, compared to morphine, "Pink" is over 7 times stronger, and fentanyl can be 50 to 100 times stronger. Carfentanil is 10,000 times stronger.

**There's even more risk when these drugs are used with prescription medicines or alcohol.** Most overdoses and deaths happen to those who take these drugs along with prescription opioids, alcohol, anxiety medicines (such as Xanax or Valium), or sleeping aids (such as Ambien).

### What to do now:

- **Don't use illegal opioids.** Read this fact sheet to understand why they are so dangerous.
- **Be prepared.** If someone close to you uses illegal opioids, get **naloxone** [nal-OX-ohn] from a pharmacist. This is a medicine that can stop an opioid overdose. Learn how to use the naloxone and **keep it where it's easy to get.**
- Visit [opidemic.utah.gov/naloxone](https://opidemic.utah.gov/naloxone)

### What to do when you think someone is having an overdose:

- **Stay calm**
- **Call 911 right away**
- **Then give the naloxone**

Signs of an overdose include: their breathing is slow or stopped, you can't wake them up, or their lips or fingernails are blue.

### Some street names of illegal opioids

There are many street names for these drugs — and they can change often. You can write in other names you know about.

- |               |               |           |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| • Apache      | • Dark        | • Junk    |
| • B           | • Dark knight | • O       |
| • Big O       | • Dope        | • Pink    |
| • Black       | • Goodfella   | • Pinky   |
| • Black stuff | • Grey death  | • Smack   |
| • Black tar   | • Hell dust   | • Train   |
| • Carfentanil | • Henry       | • Thunder |
| • Cheese      | • Heroin      | • TNT     |
| • China girl  | • Horse       | • U4      |

# Illegal Opioids: How to Protect Yourself & Others, Continued

## What could happen to someone who takes opioids?

**All opioids carry serious risks of addiction, overdose, and death.** Other ways these drugs affect people include:

- Needing more of the drug to get the same effect (called “tolerance”)
- Becoming physically dependent (you have withdrawal symptoms when you stop taking them)
- Feeling sleepy, dizzy, or confused
- Being depressed
- Feeling pain more intensely than normal
- Being constipated, feeling sick to your stomach, vomiting, or having a dry mouth
- Itching and sweating

## Where can I go for help?

If you or someone you know needs help:

- **Call 211 or visit [211.org](https://211.org).** This is a free, confidential service that helps people across the country find local resources. These can include services related to opioids or to other problems like rent, jobs, violence, and more.
- For help with addiction, visit [FindTreatment.gov](https://FindTreatment.gov)

## An Overdose Can Kill

In 2016, two 15-year-old boys in Utah bought an opioid called pink online. They were able to hide it from their parents.

They then sold the pink to two 13-year-old boys who were wanting to get high. Both of the 13-year-old boys overdosed and died.

Tragedies such as this are happening all over the United States. Here are some ways you can help save lives:

- If someone offers to give or sell you illegal drugs, walk away. Call the police—or tell your parents or a teacher.
- If someone offers to give or sell you prescription medicine that was not prescribed for you, don't take it!
- If someone you know is using illegal opioids, or any illegal drugs, help them get help.

## Notes