

Carroll County Health Department

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Public Health
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Opioid Alert

Westminster, MD (June 8, 2017) The Carroll County Health Department is alerting the community that there has been an increase in opioid overdoses this week in Maryland and in other parts of the country.

This could be due to a number of causes, but such spikes are often related to heroin laced with fentanyl or carfentanil. Counterfeit pain and anxiety pills may also be laced with fentanyl. The pills are disguised to look like frequently-prescribed and commonly-abused medications such as Percocet, oxycodone, Xanax and others.

Fentanyl and carfentanil are synthetic opioids and even a very small amount can be deadly.

First responders should use caution and utilize appropriate personal protective equipment when handling carfentanil because the drug can be absorbed through the skin. As a result, carfentanil could be dangerous to law enforcement and other first responders encountering the drug in an emergency medical situation.

Signs and symptoms of exposure to carfentanil are consistent with opioid toxicity and include:

- Pinpoint pupils
- Respiratory depression (shallow or absent breathing)
- Depressed mental status (dizziness, lethargy, sedation or loss of consciousness)
- Gastrointestinal irritation (nausea, vomiting)
- Cardiovascular failure (weak or absent pulse and cold, clammy skin)

Signs of an Opioid OVERDOSE:

- Person is not responsive
- Breathing is slow, shallow or stops
- Gurgling or snoring noises
- Fingertips or lips turn blue or grey

More than two doses of naloxone may be needed to revive someone who overdoses while using these drugs.

People who use drugs, who have loved ones that use drugs, and first responders should be on high alert. A Briefing Guide for First Responders issued by the DEA can be found at www.dea.gov

Maryland's Good Samaritan Law provides protection from arrest and prosecution for certain crimes if someone calls 911 in an effort to help during an overdose.

For information on drug treatment, call the Carroll County Health Department, Bureau of Prevention, Wellness and Recovery at 410-876-4449 and speak with a Service Coordinator for available resources.

Free opioid overdose rescue training with Naloxone is held 3rd Wednesday of each month from 5:30-7:30 pm at Access Carroll in Westminster. Call 410-876-4800 to register.

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