

LESSON DESCRIPTION

Lesson Title

Understanding Fentanyl: Synthetic Opioids and Oregon's Good Samaritan Law [as required by [Senate Bill 238](#) (2023)]

Lesson Summary/Overview

This lesson will cover the dangers of synthetic opioids, including fentanyl and fake pills, and how to respond to an overdose emergency, including how to access, administer, and use naloxone. This lesson will also ensure students know Oregon's Good Samaritan Law and the importance of accessing trusted resources.

This is only one lesson within a substance use prevention unit. Please take into consideration that substance use prevention can be a topic that may affect students' emotional well-being as they, their friends and/or family members may be dealing with substance use situations. This lesson should be taught after there is established safety and trust within the classroom setting, and at an appropriate place within a sequence of lessons for substance use prevention.

Grade Level	Suggested Time
High School	90 minutes

Author of the Lesson

Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Health Authority, and Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission

Adapted from Safety First, Comprehensive Drug Education and Intervention Lessons by Stanford REACH Lab

Objectives

Essential Questions:

- What influences my decisions around substance use?
- What is a fentanyl overdose or poisoning?
- What can I do to protect myself, my friends and others who may be experiencing a fentanyl overdose or poisoning?

Student Learning Targets:

I can:

- Describe fentanyl, and the dangers of fake pills.
- Identify signs of an overdose and how to respond.
- Describe three overdose prevention strategies, including: using test strips, never using alone, carrying naloxone.
- Explain Oregon's Good Samaritan Law.

ALIGNED STANDARDS

Aligned Standards

[Oregon 2023 Health Education Standards](#)

HS.SUB.2 Identify how to recognize and respond to overdose emergencies, including how to access, administer, and use naloxone for opioid overdose prevention and reversal.

HS.SUB.5 Analyze the data on overdose and fentanyl laced over-the-counter and prescription medications.

Skill focus areas:

High School

- Students demonstrate health literacy by accessing valid and reliable health information, products, and services to enhance health. (Skill 3)
- Students demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills to enhance health. (Skill 4)
- Students demonstrate effective decision-making skills to enhance health. (Skill 5)
- Students demonstrate observable health and safety practices. (Skill 7)
- Students advocate for behaviors that support personal, family, peer, school, and community health. (Skill 8)

RESOURCES

Resource Type	Links & Materials
Educator Materials	• High School Slide Deck • "What is Fentanyl?" Video (2 minutes 58 seconds) • "Protect Your Friends" Video (5 minutes 25 sec) • "How to Use Naloxone" Video (2 minutes 40 sec) • Poster paper or board • Laptop with internet connection • Projector • Question and Answer box
Student Materials	• Paper and pencil or digital device
Supplemental Materials	• Oregon Health Authority Oregon Department of Education Fentanyl Toolkit for Schools • Preventing Opioid Use & Overdose in School-Age Youth

LESSON OVERVIEW

Before the Lesson
• In previous classes, students have likely explored topics related to substance use. They may also have experience with accessing valid information, products and services, communication skills, and decision-making skills. It is highly recommended to explore students' prior knowledge related to the topics in this lesson and to build from this knowledge using a strengths-based approach. • Review all materials to ensure appropriateness and responsiveness for the school/class population. Add local resources for support on the Resources slide in the Slide Deck; examples could include local public health departments, youth-serving organizations, and any other community resources or school partners. • This lesson allows students to engage collaboratively with their peers on important issues adolescents face. Specifically, students learn and reflect on human development and substance use. It is important to recognize that people in the school, class and community may be impacted by substance use and acknowledge

that students are not alone. Establish norms and expectations to ensure students can participate in these conversations and activities safely. Before the lesson, revisit the norms and expectations to ground the conversation and ensure a safe space for all students, including a reminder about confidentiality. Remind students that while they may reflect on their own experiences during participation, they will never be required to share personal information.

- Utilize a Question and Answer box to address student's on-going questions.
- Reflect on your own personal privilege, biases, and perspectives when approaching topics related to social justice, such as those that appear in this and subsequent lessons. Bringing a lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion of all communities represented and not represented in the lesson materials is essential to the development of socially healthy and health literate individuals. Like other health education topics, it is important to recognize that some content and activities in this lesson may be challenging, however, leaning into and learning from that discomfort with students is part of the learning process and requires care. It is essential to establish and foster a safe learning space that encourages bravery among students and adults; allowing all voices to be valued.
- The content of this lesson is required per SB 238 (2023). Educators are encouraged to adapt the delivery and engagement strategies to be responsive to the specific needs of their learners.

During the Lesson

Activity 1: Welcome the class and review the classroom guidelines/group norms to ensure a safe and inclusive classroom (5 minutes)

- **Introduce the [High School Slide Deck](#)**
Show Slide 1: Say, "Today we are going to talk about a topic that is important to keep us, our friends, and our communities safe. We're going to discuss fentanyl, which is a type of substance that can be deadly. By the end of our lesson, I hope you all feel a little more knowledgeable about staying safe and healthy– and more confident in helping those around you, too."
- Say, "Before we get started, I want to remind everyone about our classroom guidelines around safety and inclusivity. I know that this can be a tough and sensitive topic, so we want to be aware of the language that we use. For some people, talking about substances and opioids may be something we're used to and are comfortable

asking questions about. For others of us, we may feel uneasy, nervous, or scared. Remember, all of these feelings are valid. Let's support each other as we learn together."

- a. Review classroom guidelines for sensitive topics.
- b. Ask the class if there are additional guidelines that might need to be added.
- c. Ask students to set an intention for which guideline they are going to practice throughout the lesson.

Activity 2: Warm-up (10 minutes)

- **Show Slide 2:** Say, "We are going to be discussing fentanyl and fake pills, and the Good Samaritan Laws that protect us in situations that involve substance use and helping people who are using substances or experiencing an overdose. We will also cover how to respond to an overdose by using Narcan/naloxone. This lesson has been adapted from a curriculum called Safety First, by Stanford's REACH Lab."
- **Show Slide 3:** Review learning targets with the class.
 - a. Describe fentanyl, and the dangers of fake pills.
 - b. Identify signs of an overdose and how to respond.
 - c. Describe three overdose prevention strategies, including test strips, never using alone, carrying naloxone.
 - d. Explain Oregon's Good Samaritan Law.
- **Show Slide 4:** Say, "We're going to discuss a class of drugs which some of you have probably heard of: opioids. As a warm-up activity to introduce this topic, take 2 minutes and turn to a partner and discuss these two questions: What have you heard about opioids and their effects? And what do you want to know about opioids?" Now let's discuss some responses that you came up with. Ask for a few responses from various groups. "Thank you for your responses. We'll try to answer some of those comments or questions in this lesson".
- **Show Slide 5:** Say, "This class of drugs originally came from the opium poppy plant, although there are now synthetic versions available as well. Can anyone name some commonly used opioids?" Allow students to respond.
- **Show Slide 6:** Say, "Here are some examples of opioids: fentanyl (a synthetic opioid), heroin, morphine, codeine, OxyContin/Percocet (oxycodone), Vicodin (hydrocodone)."

Activity 3: Overview of Opioids (10 minutes)

- **Show Slide 7:** Say, “Opioids have been around for a long time. As early as 3400 B.C., the Sumerians were using opium poppies to treat pain. As the plant spread, cultures around the world began using opium as part of medicinal treatments. Other derivatives of the drug, including morphine and heroin, were also created as medical remedies. In fact, Bayer, a German drug company, used to manufacture and sell heroin as a cough suppressant.

Opioid drugs, like heroin and oxycodone, have molecules which mimic the shape of the opioid system’s neurotransmitters.

Our bodies have a naturally occurring opioid system that helps us manage pain and learn to repeat beneficial behaviors, like eating. When these neurotransmitters attach to opioid receptors, they help relieve pain or reinforce behavior by flooding the brain with dopamine which causes feelings of euphoria.

The way an opioid is taken can also increase harm. Opioids may be taken orally, snorted, smoked or injected with a syringe (needle).”

- **Show Slide 8:** Say, “Opioids work by mimicking the body’s natural pain relief system. They may be able to help reduce pain, BUT:
 - Opioids can impair judgment and physical actions
 - Opioids are very addictive
 - Injecting is the riskiest method of use
 - Sharing syringes can spread infections”
- **Show Slide 9:** Say “In the short-term, opioids can have benefits such as pain relief and sedation, and feelings of euphoria, calm, or relief from anxiety. Someone experiencing the effects of an opioid drug may have small, contracted pupils, loose muscles and slurred speech. They may feel nausea, have constipation, fall asleep unexpectedly, and scratch a lot because of itchy skin. They may also have erratic or slow breathing, or, in the case of an overdose, stop breathing entirely.”
- **Show Slide 10:** Say, “Overdose is possible with any form of opioid, and can be fatal. Risk of overdose increases when opioids are mixed with other drugs. This is risky because in addition to relieving pain, opioids also act on the respiratory system. Opioids can cause erratic breathing, slow breathing, or, in the case of an overdose, stop it all together.

The relaxed, euphoric feeling people get from taking opioids can be very addictive. Over time, the continuous use of opioids lessens their effect, building tolerance.

Someone may start taking higher doses of opioids in order to get relief from pain or to get high.

Increased tolerance can lead to physical dependence, which means if someone stops using opioids they may experience such strong withdrawal symptoms they feel physically sick.

Physical dependence, combined with a reliance on the feelings of comfort and safety opioids can produce, can lead to addiction.”

Activity 4 - Introduction to Fentanyl (5 minutes)

- **Show Slide 11:** Say, “Turn to a partner and share one new or interesting thing you learned so far today, and what, if anything, you know about fentanyl.”

Fentanyl is perhaps the most well-known of the synthetic opioids. It is one of the most potent opioids approved for medical use, intended for treating severe pain or for chronic pain patients who have developed a tolerance to less potent opiates such as oxycodone or morphine and which no longer help them manage their pain.

However, recently fentanyl is often produced illicitly – outside of the legal regulatory system – and many related compounds (analogues) have been appearing that have no prior use in medicine. It has also been found in the larger drug supply. In fact, the DEA (US Drug Enforcement Administration) has released a statement saying that as many as 6/10 fake prescription pills contain lethal amounts of fentanyl.

So, what are the effects of fentanyl? Fentanyl’s effects are generally the same as other opioids like heroin, but because of the drug’s potency, they often appear faster and can last longer.

Activity 5 - Video and reflection (10 minutes)

- **Slide 11:** Introduce the video by saying, “We are going to watch a video that covers what fentanyl is, and how it is affecting our communities. Jot down any questions that may come up for you such as: **What connections are you making? What did you learn? What other questions do you have?**

Play video: [What is Fentanyl?](#) (2 minutes 58 seconds)

- **Show Slide 12:** Provide instructions for a pair/share activity by saying, “With the

person next to you, discuss and come up with some major points that stood out to you to share with the whole class.” Have students use the same three questions: What connections are you making? What did you learn? What other questions do you have?

Activity 6 - Cycle of Addiction (5 minutes)

- **Show Slide 13:** Say, “Just like diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic conditions, addiction is an illness that requires treatment. According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), ‘addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory, and related circuitry.’ As we’ve discussed, opioids can be extremely addictive.”

****Optional video: Let's watch a TedEd video (8:21) to understand a little more about how opioid addiction works.***

Play video: [What causes opioid addiction, and why is it so tough to combat?](#)

Activity 7 - Reducing Harm (10 minutes)

- **Show Slide 14:** Say, “The best way to reduce the harms of opioids is to not use them unless they have been prescribed to you by a doctor or another healthcare provider. Using opioids or any medication not prescribed by a doctor is risky because they sometimes have other substances added, like fentanyl. Even using opioids for a medical purpose with a prescription can be dangerous if misused.”
 - DO NOT use opioids unless they’ve been prescribed to you.
 - DO NOT give others your prescribed opioids.
 - Use them according to a doctor’s direction (dose and dosage).
- **Show Slide 15:** Say, “For those using opioids, whether prescribed or otherwise, a key overdose prevention strategy is to use as low a dose as possible as infrequently as possible. This helps reduce the risk of overdose as well as the risk of developing tolerance, which can lead to a drug dependence.”
- **Show Slide 16:** Say, “Accessing substances from anywhere but a pharmacy can be dangerous, as they are unregulated and can contain other substances, such as fentanyl. You should never obtain drugs from anywhere besides a pharmacy, even from someone that you know and trust.”

Ask students to look at the picture on the slide of an authentic and a fake Xanax. Say, “This slide shows two pictures of Xanax, which is a medication that some people have prescribed by their doctor. The picture on the left is Xanax from a pharmacy and the

picture on the right is a fake Xanax that might contain fentanyl that could lead to an overdose. It is really difficult/impossible to tell the pills apart and that is why it is so important to not take any pills that are not your prescription. Why do you think fake pills are made to look that way?"

- **Show Slide 17:** Say, "Sometimes people purposefully mix opioids with other drugs. As we've mentioned before, mixing substances is risky and many drug-related deaths involve more than one drug. For example, mixing opioids and depressant drugs like alcohol, Valium, and Xanax may increase the chance of overdose death, as both classes of drugs slow breathing. There is also increased risk when opioids are mixed with a stimulant drug like cocaine, a practice known as 'speed balling.' Speed balling reduces the ability to recognize the symptoms of overdose of either drug. It's also extremely dangerous when opioids are laced with other drugs the user may not be aware of."

Activity 8 - Video and Discussion on [Protect Your Friends](#) (5 min 25 sec) (10 minutes)

- **Show Slide 18:** Say, "We want to make sure you have all the knowledge you need to help someone who is experiencing substance use and/or overdose. The next video will show signs of an overdose, how to use Narcan and naloxone when someone is experiencing an overdose, and how to use fentanyl test strips." Show video - "[Protect Your Friends](#)." After the video, use the following discussion prompts:
 - What is one overdose prevention strategy that people can take with opioids?
 - How accurate are fentanyl test strips?
 - Where would someone get fentanyl test strips?
 - Some counties have fentanyl test strips available through Public Health Departments and other partners.

Activity 9: Scenario (10 minutes)

- **Show Slide 19:** Say, "Let's talk about a scenario that might come up for you and/or your friends. With a partner, discuss your answers to the following questions and be ready to highlight some of the top points that came up with the whole class."
 - Imagine you have a friend interested in trying a pill that was offered at a party. Based on what we have learned about how opioids work, what information would you want your friend to have?
 - If your friend was still going to take the pill, what advice would you give them about reducing the harms of use?
 - What would you do if you were offered the pill at the party?"

Activity 10 - Recognizing Signs of an Overdose and Understanding Oregon's Good Samaritan Law (10 minutes)

- **Show Slide 20:** Say, "The video showed us how to recognize an opioid overdose. Let's review the signs" (Take some responses).
 - Potential responses: Slow, shallow, or erratic breathing; pinpoint pupils; snoring or gurgling sounds; loss of consciousness; unresponsive to stimulus; limp; slow pulse/no pulse; pale or ashen and clammy; fingers and lips turn blue or purple; vomiting.
- **Show Slide 21: Say,** "As the video explains, an opioid overdose can be reversed using naloxone. Many emergency services personnel, even schools, have started to carry naloxone because of the opioid overdose crisis. Even though we have lifesaving equipment like Naloxone, sometimes people don't call 9-1-1 because they are afraid they'll get in legal trouble. That's why most states have laws, referred to as Good Samaritan laws or 9-1-1 drug overdose laws, to protect people who call to report drug overdoses. The laws are different in each state, but in Oregon, if someone is overdosing and you seek medical help, neither of you can be arrested or prosecuted for possessing drugs or paraphernalia, being in a place where drugs are used, or violating probation or parole for any outstanding warrants related to drug possession."([ORS 475.898](#))
- **Show Slide 22:** Say, "Because we want to be sure everyone remembers what to do in an overdose situation we are going to spend some time learning how to use naloxone by watching this video."
 - Show video: [How to Use Naloxone](#) (2 min 40 sec)
 - Say, "The most common way naloxone is used is through the nose using a nasal spray. The most common brand name for naloxone nasal spray you may have heard of is called Narcan.
 - It is also important to know that you can administer Naloxone even if it is not an opioid overdose. So if you're not sure that the person is overdosing, it would be safe to give it to them anyway.
 - "911 should always be called immediately any time an overdose is suspected even when Naloxone is used."

Activity 11: Questions, Comments and Resources (5 minutes)

- **Slide 23:** Say, "If you have any other questions, please feel free to put them in our Q and A box and we can address them during our next class. In the meantime, please know that there are trusted adults and professionals that you can reach out to with

questions you may have, and who can help you find resources that you, a family member or a friend may need when dealing with substance use”.

- Say, “Thank you for all your hard work today learning about a difficult and complex subject. I want to remind you that if you need to talk to someone, you can talk with our school nurse, school counselor, or other trusted adult and find support.”
- Please research your local resources to share with students. Example resources:
 - [Never Use Alone](#)
 - [SAMHSA Hotline](#)
 - [Lines for Life](#)
 - [Fentanyl Toolkit for Schools](#)
- Exit ticket includes: Write down one new thing you learned today; what the Good Samaritan Law is; signs of an overdose and how to respond; or anything else you want me to know?

After the Lesson

Evaluate student work and exit tickets to assess student achievement of learning objectives.

Continue with follow-up lessons after this lesson. This is one lesson to be covered within your substance use unit.