



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Frederick County Health Department

# Public Health Alert

**September 2, 2021-** The Behavioral Health Services Division of the Frederick County Health Department has heard reports of the presence of possible counterfeit prescription medications in our community, resulting in overdose. A number of non-fatal overdose incidents involving counterfeit pills have been reported in Frederick County, Maryland. These counterfeit pills may be sold as Percocet, M30, other prescription opiates, or Xanax (benzodiazepine) and may contain fentanyl or other cutting agents, such as xylazine. Some of the counterfeit pills are described as bluish tablets and are reported to have been ordered online.

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. In its prescription, form it is prescribed for pain, but fentanyl is also made illegally and distributed as a street drug. It is often found as a cutting agent in heroin, cocaine, counterfeit pills and other street drugs. People who use drugs may be unaware of its presence, which can result in overdose. Fentanyl has been involved in fatal overdoses in Frederick County.

Xylazine is often used as a sedative, muscle relaxant and analgesic in animals and is not approved for human consumption. Xylazine has been involved in fatal overdoses in Frederick County. Narcan does not work on this substance, but since it is a cutting agent often mixed with opioids, Narcan should still be administered.

Anyone obtaining pills from a non-pharmacy is encouraged to practice overdose prevention strategies to reduce the risk of overdose. This includes becoming trained in overdose response, carrying Narcan, not using alone and using fentanyl test strips to detect the presence of fentanyl in your substance.

The Frederick County Health Department Behavioral Health Services offers free overdose response training, overdose prevention education, Narcan and fentanyl test strips. For more information or if you or a loved one is in need of support or treatment resources, please call 301-600-1777 or email [harmreductionservices@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:harmreductionservices@frederickcountymd.gov).

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