



Metro Public Health Dept
Nashville / Davidson County
Protecting, Improving, and Sustaining Health

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISORY

Increase in Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Fake Xanax/Roxicodone Pills

February 12, 2021

DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this joint statement is to provide an urgent advisory to the public and community partners regarding an increase in suspected drug overdose deaths occurring in middle Tennessee reported to involve fake Xanax (alprazolam) or Roxicodone (oxycodone hydrochloride) pills.

In addition, local public health and safety officials have observed an increase of suspected drug overdose deaths involving benzodiazepines (such as Xanax) over the last several months. Of note, the most common substance detected with these cases was fentanyl, a synthetic opioid pain reliever that is 50-100 times stronger than morphine.

Taking fake or counterfeit pills puts an individual at greater risk of death due to increased likelihood of such pills also containing fentanyl. A lethal dose of fentanyl is two milligrams or the equivalent of a few grains of salt. **We urge the community to be alert to the life-threatening dangers associated with these products.**

IDENTIFYING FAKE/COUNTERFEIT PILLS

Fake pills can be identified by examining the edges and logo of the pill. Compared to fake/counterfeit pills bought on the street, prescription pills will have sharp edges and a well-defined logo.

Fake Xanax Pill



Fake Roxicodone Pill (30 mg with "M" logo)



ACTION STEPS

This advisory recommends adjusting response capacity and implementing necessary protective measures including:

- Avoiding using street drugs alone.
- Carrying naloxone and being prepared to use multiple doses when necessary.
- Administering naloxone for drug overdoses even when non-opioids are indicated.
- Using necessary personal protective equipment.

PUBLIC RESOURCES

Tennessee REDLINE

- The purpose of the Tennessee REDLINE is to provide accurate, up-to-date alcohol, drug, problem gambling, and other addiction information and referrals to all citizens of Tennessee at their request.
- **Phone:** [1.800.889.9789](tel:1.800.889.9789) (toll free 24 hours/7 days)
- **Website:** <https://www.taadas.org/our-programs-and-services/redline>

Naloxone Training & Kits

- Information regarding naloxone training and free naloxone kits (when available) can be found on the Nashville Prevention Partnership website:
- **Website:** <http://nashvilleprevention.org/what-we-do/>
- In Tennessee, the Good Samaritan Law grants civil immunity for individuals administering naloxone to someone they reasonably believe is overdosing on an opioid.

Overdose Signs

- Person is not responsive
- Fingertips or lips turn blue or grey
- Breathing is slow, shallow, or has stopped
- Person is gurgling or making snoring noises

What can you do if you see an opioid overdose?

- Call 911
- If you have naloxone, give the person naloxone and perform rescue breathing
- If no response after 2-3 minutes, give a second dose of naloxone
- Do not leave the person alone (help will arrive)
- If the person starts to breathe or becomes more alert, lay the person in the recovery position: put the person slightly on the left side so that their body is supported by a bent knee with their face turned to the side and bottom arm reaching out to stabilize the position

CONTACT

If you have any additional information or questions, please contact:

Opioid/Overdose Response and Reduction Program

Division of Behavioral Health and Wellness

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