

CCENDU Drug Alert

Increasing Availability of Counterfeit Oxycodone Tablets Containing Fentanyl

This alert updates an earlier CCENDU Drug Alert. Please see *CCENDU Drug Alert: Illicit Fentanyl* (posted July 25, 2013) at www.ccsa.ca.

This alert is to advise that counterfeit oxycodone (popular brand name OxyContin®) pills containing fentanyl have become increasingly available in several Canadian communities. The presence of fentanyl in these counterfeit pills increases the risk of overdose among people using them.

The pills resemble oxycodone tablets. Some are green and stamped with “CDN” on one side and the number 80 on the other (see Figure 1). They are being referred to colloquially as “green monsters” or “green beans” in eastern Canada and “green jellies” or “street oxy” in Western Canada. While the green tablets appear to be more widely available, pills have also surfaced that are white with the number 10 stamped in place of the 80. We have reports of these pills appearing in Alberta and British Columbia in November–December 2013 and have recently received reports of large quantities available in St John’s, Newfoundland (as of February 2014).

After verification with Health Canada’s Drug Analysis Service (DAS), laboratory tests of seized counterfeit oxycodone tablets (different brands, sizes and colours) were most often found to contain fentanyl (89% of the time). Much less frequently tablets were found to contain Alprazolam or Ketamine as the active ingredient. Note that DAS only analyzes a subset of the substances seized by law enforcement agencies, which would also be a subset of the substances found on the illicit market.

Given the presence of fentanyl and other drugs in these counterfeit pills, individuals who believe they are using oxycodone are at greater risk of an accidental overdose.



Figure 1. Samples of seized counterfeit oxycodone tablets

Please distribute this alert to those working with drug-using populations and those who are the first to respond to overdoses (e.g., paramedics, emergency departments).



More information on illicitly produced fentanyl can be found in the CCENDU Drug Alert on Illicit Fentanyl, cited above.

CCENDU will continue to monitor the situation regarding counterfeit oxycodone tablets containing fentanyl in Canada. If you have any questions, comments, information to contribute or corrections to the information contained in this bulletin or wish to subscribe and receive updates as new information becomes available, please contact CCENDU@ccsa.ca.

For more information on CCENDU and to review previous CCENDU Alerts and Bulletins please visit www.ccsa.ca.

**Prepared by the CCSA in partnership with the
Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (CCENDU)**

The Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (CCENDU) is a nation-wide network of community level partners who share information about local trends and emerging issues in substance use and exchange knowledge and tools to support more effective data collection.

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