



June 2016

Your file Votre référence

Dear Parents,

Our file Notre référence

The end of the school year is upon us and as you and your children prepare for summer vacation, we want to ensure that you are aware of some of the current risks with respect to illicit drugs so that you and your family can have a safe summer.

This year, the Surrey RCMP and emergency health services have responded to a number of drug overdoses. In fact, Surrey has the second highest number of illicit drug overdose deaths in the province this year.

The BC Coroners Service recently released a report on [Illicit Drug Overdose Deaths in BC](#) which shows that there were 308 illicit drug overdose deaths from January to May 2016. This is a 75% increase over 2015. Fentanyl was detected in over half of this year's overdose deaths.

Fentanyl, new fentanyl equivalents, and W compounds are appearing in the illegal market, locally. Fentanyl is up to 100 times more toxic than morphine and a small amount can cause serious harm or death. W-18 is 100 times more powerful than fentanyl, making it over 10,000 times more potent than morphine. Fentanyl is often found as a primary ingredient in fake Oxycodone tablets (see photo), fake Percocet tablets (see photo) and heroin. Police have also found other drugs contaminated with fentanyl, such as powder cocaine, crack cocaine, MDMA, and methamphetamine. Individuals who package and process drugs can unintentionally contaminate their other products with fentanyl, which can lead to an inadvertent overdose. You can't see, smell, or taste it, and a drug user would have no idea if and how much fentanyl may be in the drug they are about to consume.

Despite our best efforts as parents, our children can easily be at-risk of drug use. They are young and influenced by people and factors outside of our control. In addition, a child's susceptibility to drug use is not determined by their family's socio-economic status or where they live. It is important to not assume your child hasn't already or isn't thinking about experimenting with drugs – it's not always as obvious as we think.

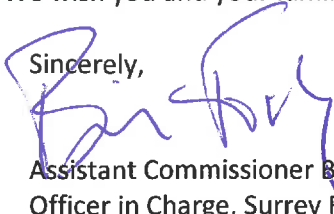
And whether your child experiments with drugs for the first time or uses drugs regularly to 'escape' or fit in, serious harm or death is a very real possibility. Overdoses do not discriminate between the first time and the fiftieth time one takes drugs.

An important step to take in protecting your children is to talk to them about drugs – particularly the hidden nature of fentanyl and its lethal power. We have included some tips for talking to your child on the second page of this letter. Children often have more free time in the summer, so it is important that you keep an eye on their activities, mood and friends, and keep the dialogue open.

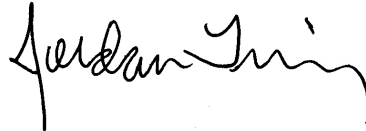
The Surrey RCMP and Surrey School District are committed to helping keep families safe. The Surrey RCMP recently launched a **Parent Helpline (604-599-7800)** that provides assistance to parents who are concerned about their children becoming involved in illegal activities. Through this helpline, parents can get in touch with our youth officers who can provide resources, police information, and intervention services. The Helpline is available in English, Punjabi, and French. I encourage you to reach out to us if you need assistance.

We wish you and your family a safe and enjoyable summer.

Sincerely,



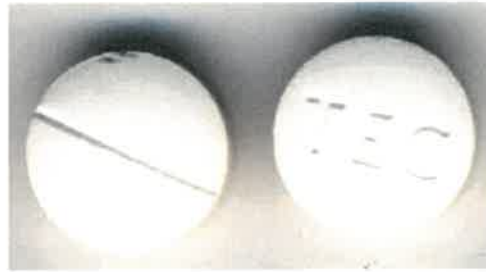
Assistant Commissioner Bill Fordy
Officer in Charge, Surrey RCMP



Dr. Jordan Tinney
Superintendent/CEO, Surrey School District



Fake Oxycodone tablets



Fake Percocet tablets

Starting the conversation about drugs:

- Look for opportunities to talk about drug use with your teenager, like when you discuss school or current events.
- Plan the main points you want to discuss, rather than speaking on impulse. Avoid saying everything you think all at once. Instead, target your main points about drugs.
- Listen to them and respect their opinion. If they see you as a good listener, they may be more inclined to trust your input. Give them room to participate and ask questions.
- Focus on facts rather than emotions. If your teenager is using drugs, you may feel anger, sadness, fear or confusion. Those are natural reactions. But talking about the issue is more productive than talking about your feelings.
- Avoid being judgmental.
- Respect their independence. Tell them you are trying to help them make good decisions, by giving them information they may not know.
- Be clear about why you are worried. Whatever your teenager may think, communicate that your main concern is for their well-being.
- You are your teenager's most important role model and their best defense against drug use. Start early and answer the questions about drugs before they are asked.

Signs that may indicate your teen is using drugs:

- Increased secrecy about possessions, friends and activities,
- Use of incense, room deodorant, or perfume to hide smoke or chemical odours,
- New interest in clothes that reference drug use,
- Increased need for money, or
- Missing prescription drugs - especially narcotics and sedatives.

Additional Resources:

www.knowyoursource.ca

www.canadadrugfree.org