



**County of Sacramento**

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**DRUG OVERDOSE HEALTH ALERT:  
Fentanyl-Contaminated Street Norco  
March 25, 2016**

**Situational Update**

The Sacramento County Division of Public Health has received reports from local hospital emergency departments of at least 12 poisoning overdoses within the past 48 hours associated with ingestion of street Norco tablets that may be contaminated with fentanyl. Norco used in combination with the fast-acting synthetic opiate fentanyl increases the risk of severe injury and death. Please see actions requested of clinicians and emergency responders below:

**Actions Requested of All Clinicians and Emergency Responders:**

1. **Report** to Sacramento County Division of Public Health (SCDPH) electronically via CalREDIE or via confidential fax (916) 854-9709 the following suspected and confirmed drug poisoning cases:
  - *Emergency Department Visits* due to opioid overdose
  - *All deaths* due to opioid overdoseMedical records should be sent via confidential fax (916) 854-9709.
2. **Exercise increased vigilance** in promptly identifying suspected overdose patients and taking appropriate action. Signs and symptoms of opioid overdose include unconsciousness or unresponsiveness, respiratory depression or arrest, cyanosis, vomiting and pinpoint pupils.
3. **Warn patients** with a history of substance use about the risks of purchasing street drugs. Fentanyl is odorless and drugs contaminated with fentanyl cannot be easily distinguished from drugs that are not contaminated. Fentanyl is estimated to be 80 times as potent as morphine and hundreds of times more potent than heroin.
4. **Consider toxicology screening** specific for fentanyl when ordering drug panels for overdose patients.

If you need more information about reporting suspected cases of drug poisoning overdoses, call Sacramento County Public Health at (919) 875-5881 Monday-Friday between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Olivia Kasirye MD".

Olivia Kasirye, MD, MS  
Public Health Officer