



## **Carfentanil detected in Thunder Bay**

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit and the Thunder Bay Drug Strategy have issued two alerts to the community about the detection of carfentanil found in Thunder Bay. The first alert was issued January 12, 2018 after a local urine sample came back positive for the presence of carfentanil. It was not associated with an overdose or death. The second alert was issued March 26, 2018. This was as a result of drugs, which were being sold as powder fentanyl, were seized on March 9, 2018 by the Thunder Bay Police. The substance was sent to Health Canada for testing, and came back positive for carfentanil.

**Background:** Carfentanil is 10,000 times more potent than morphine and can rapidly lead to overdose and death. Street drugs contaminated with carfentanil have been detected with increasing frequency in Canada. This is the first time carfentanil has been detected in the Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

**Personal protection measures:** The Ontario Poison Centre advises health care providers that, "Although very small doses of fentanyl and its analogues can be dangerous, there are no reports of rescuers succumbing to opioid overdoses when helping victims. There are no reports of peers, EMS workers or hospital staff getting ill by providing basic lifesaving care to these victims. Universal precautions should be followed as per usual."

**Counselling patients:** People who use drugs can reduce the risk of harm from carfentanil and other opioids by:

- using drugs in the presence of others (and if using together, not everyone should use at once), or arranging for someone to check in on them;
- trying a small amount before using their usual amount;
- calling 911 if someone develops signs of opioid toxicity; and,
- administering naloxone.

Naloxone and overdose awareness training are available for free through the Thunder Bay District Health Unit: <https://www.tbdhu.com/health-topics/alcohol-other-drugs/preventing-opioid-overdose-naloxone>. Naloxone is also available at many pharmacies in Thunder Bay with a valid health card: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/where-get-free-naloxone-kit>

Sign up for **e-mail opioid alerts** from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit: <https://www.tbdhu.com/health-topics/alcohol-other-drugs/opioid-information-system>

### **References:**

Ontario Poison Centre Opioid Myths and Facts: <http://www.ontariopoisoncentre.ca/health-care-professionals/Opioid-Management/opioid-management.aspx>