

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Health Officials Warn of Local Rise in Opioid Overdoses

The Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) has been informed by local emergency response personnel of a sudden increase in opioid overdoses in the Ellensburg area, presumed to be caused by fentanyl laced pills. KCPHD recommends that anyone using illicit opioids (hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, heroin, as examples) for any reason and that anyone spending time with someone using or suspected of using illicit opioids should have naloxone, also known by the brand name Narcan, and an overdose prevention plan.

Naloxone is an antidote for opioid overdose and can temporarily stop the effects of the opiate. **KCPHD has Naloxone in nasal and injectable formulations available at no cost to any member of the community and provides training on use.** Narcan Nasal Spray is an easy-to-use, FDA-approved formulation of naloxone. KCPHD Syringe Service Program (SSP) has naloxone nasal and injectable as well as several other harm reduction resources available at no cost to **any** member of the community and can connect individuals to recovery resources. Naloxone is also available at any pharmacy with a prescription from a medical health provider. However, it may only be covered by health insurance for people who are personally at risk of overdose.

The CDC recognizes that fentanyl and synthetic opioid related overdoses cause over 150 deaths daily and that deadly levels of fentanyl are not detectable through sight, smell, or taste. Local health jurisdictions, including KCPHD, are actively monitoring local drug overdose reports with regional and state epidemiologists to follow trends.

The epidemic of substance use disorders is complex and is becoming more deadly. Our friends, family members, neighbors and community members may be affected and in need of help for themselves or their loved ones. Substance use disorders often result from injury, dependence on well-intentioned prescription pain medications, behavioral health needs, healthcare difficulty in accessing resources for wellness and healthy living, and several other complex past and present inequities.

For more information about naloxone and resources, visit [StopOverdose.org](https://stopoverdose.org) at <https://stopoverdose.org/find-naloxone-near-me-washington-state/> or the Washington State Department of Health at <https://doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/drug-user-health/overdose-education-naloxone-distribution/naloxone-instructions>. For information about Naloxone and KCPHD's Harm Reduction and SSP program, please contact the Kittitas County Public Health Department at 509-962-7515 or visit <https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/health/>.



*To Protect and Promote the Health and the Environment of the People of Kittitas County*

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