

# DRUGS / FAKE PILLS

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services / Your Life Iowa

Campaign URL: [yourlifeiowa.org/Fake-Pills](https://yourlifeiowa.org/Fake-Pills)

## BANNER AD

(Available in English, Spanish and French)

Sizes: 160x600px / 300x250px / 300x600px / 728x90 300x50px / 320x50px



## POSTERS

(Available in both English and Spanish)

Sizes: 8.5x11" / 11x17"



### HOW TO GET FILES

The easiest way to access these materials is to visit

<https://yourlifeiowa.org/resource-center>



# DRUGS / FAKE PILLS

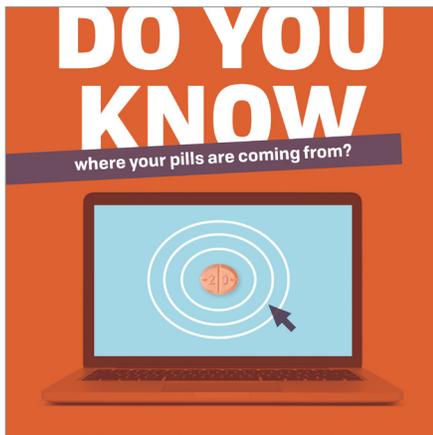
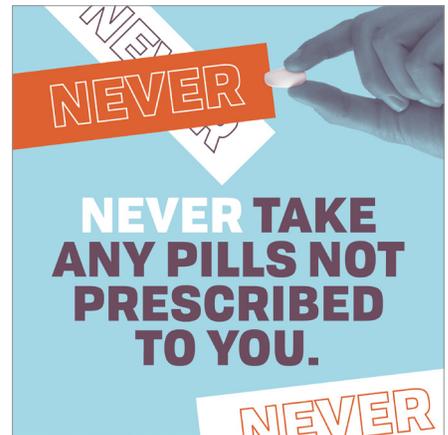
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## SOCIAL

(Available in English, Spanish and French)

1080x1080px



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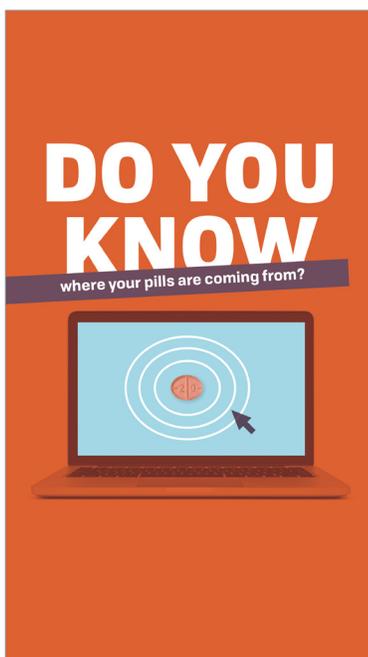
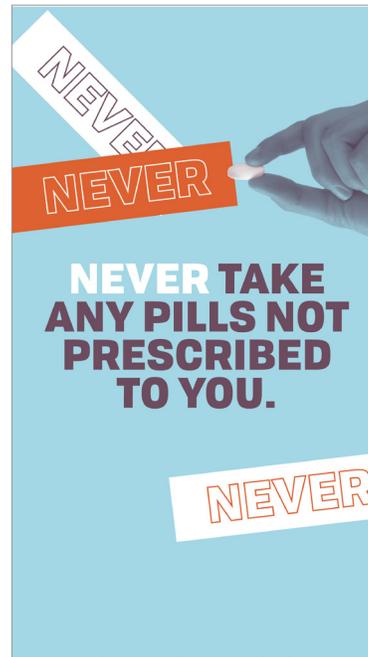
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## SNAPCHAT

(Available in English, Spanish and French)

(Static) 1080x1920px



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## FACT SHEET

(Available in both English and Spanish)

8.5x11"

**THE TRUTH ABOUT COUNTERFEIT PILLS**

YOUR LIFE IOWA  
Iowa HHS

Widely available and easy to purchase, counterfeit pills are making their way into communities at alarming rates, causing increases in substance use disorders, overdoses and, in some cases, death.

### FAKE PILLS. REAL HARM.

Mass-produced counterfeit pills, touted as legitimate prescription medication, are not only sold locally but are now also broadly marketed through internet e-commerce sites and social media, appealing to audiences of all ages — including minors. These illegally purchased fake pills may contain no active ingredient(s), the wrong active ingredient(s) or the right ingredient(s) but in an incorrect quantity.

Even more dangerous, cheap and highly addictive drugs, like methamphetamine, heroin and fentanyl, are being added to and disguised as drugs like Oxycontin®, Percocet® and Xanax®. Those using these fake pills have no way of knowing what they may be taking — or the risk it may pose.

**Overdose deaths are the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 to 45 years old.<sup>1</sup>**

### MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Counterfeit pills are made to look nearly identical to their legitimate counterparts, in both design and packaging, making it practically impossible to know the difference outside of a lab test.

A majority of counterfeit pills resemble prescription opioids, such as oxycodone (Oxycontin®, Percocet®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®) and alprazolam (Xanax®), or stimulants, like amphetamines (Adderall®).



The most common counterfeit pills resemble oxycodone 30mg (M30) pills, which can vary in color from white to blue. Street names for these pills are "Mexican Blues," "Blues" or "M-Boxes."

**Kids and teens are being targeted with fake pills in a variety of shapes and colors. According to the CDC, overdose deaths linked to synthetic opioids, like fentanyl, tripled in the past two years, yet 73 percent weren't aware that fake prescription pills could be made with fentanyl.**

### A DANGEROUS DOSE

Whether an individual is a regular substance user or someone experimenting for the first time, taking prescription medications not prescribed to the user by a licensed medical professional and dispensed by a registered pharmacist can be deadly. Counterfeit drugs may contain lethal amounts of drugs, usually fentanyl and methamphetamine.



**State health data for 2021 shows 87 percent of overdoses in Iowa were linked to fentanyl, compared to 31 percent in 2016.<sup>2</sup>**

According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), 2 out of every 5 counterfeit pills tested that have fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose, or about two milligrams — small enough to fit on the tip of a pencil. Fentanyl is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine, and 50 times more potent than heroin. Synthetic opioids, such as illicit fentanyl, are the primary reason for the increase in deaths since 2020, accounting for 80 percent of opioid-related deaths.<sup>1</sup>

06/2022

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention / 2. Iowa Department of Public Health / Photography credit: Department of Justice / Drug Enforcement Administration

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