

# Fake Pills: Uncovering the Truth



**Think you know all about fake meds? Think again! Because what you don't know can be deadly.**

**Part 1:** Read the information below, and then answer the question related to the graphic.

Counterfeit pills are fake versions of medicines like Oxycontin®, Adderal®, and Xanax®. They are sold illegally, often on social media, rather than the safe way — through a licensed pharmacy with a prescription from a trusted medical professional.

<sup>SM</sup> Fake pills can harm you, especially ones that contain ingredients like fentanyl. Fentanyl is a very strong synthetic opioid sometimes used to treat severe pain under the strict supervision of a doctor. Criminals often use it as a filler ingredient because it's cheap to make and is highly addictive. The drug binds itself to receptors in the brain that control emotions and pain. After taking the drug, even for a brief time, the brain's sensitivity is weakened and it depends on the drug to feel pleasure. This makes someone a repeat customer to a drug dealer. (Other effects of fentanyl include happiness, drowsiness, nausea, confusion, problems breathing, unconsciousness, and more.)

But fentanyl can be deadly. A very small amount of fentanyl — as little as a few grains that could fit on the tip of a pencil — can be lethal. People who buy pills from social media, from friends, or anywhere other than a licensed pharmacist can't know if the pills are real or contain fentanyl. They may look like the real deal, but think again. Tragically, many people — especially young people — are fooled into death as a result. Because of this, fentanyl overdose is the leading cause of death for teens and young adults.

Complete the graphic below. Once done, consider this: Is it worth taking a pill that you bought online or got from a friend? Write your thoughts on the back of this sheet.

Risks of Pills Not Prescribed to You	Perceived Benefits of Pills Not Prescribed to You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

**Part 2:** Review the handout demonstrating exchanges between drug dealers and potential buyers. Analyze each exchange and discuss what went right or wrong.

