

Buying Drugs Online – What You Should Know & How to Protect Your Kids

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Where are kids getting drugs? Twenty years ago, the answer to this question would only have been: from classmates at school, from friends at a party, or from a medicine cabinet. Fast forward to today and you'll find that young people are also getting drugs online, perhaps now more than ever.

Recent cases:

- Two Utah 8th graders overdosed and died after taking U-47700, a potent synthetic opioid also known as “pink,” they got from other teens who bought it online.
- A Minnesota teen overdosed and died after taking the synthetic psychedelic drug DPT (dipropyltryptamine) he bought online.
- The 16-year old son of famous television therapist Dr. Laura Berman died after overdosing on fentanyl. Berman believes her son bought the drug from a dealer on Snapchat.

As these tragic cases – and others like them– show, it is not hard for teens to use the internet to buy drugs without their parents' knowledge. Many who buy drugs online do it through the so-called “dark web” – a part of the internet you can only access using a special anonymous browser. They

purchase drugs using the virtual currency, [Bitcoin](#). Because of the anonymity, sites on the dark web are harder for law enforcement to shut down.

In addition, the internet has become one of the main ways to sell synthetic opioids like fentanyl, which has become a leading cause of deadly drug overdoses due to its high potency, the [New York Times](#) reports.

With drugs being so accessible, as a parent or caregiver, you may feel a little overwhelmed when it comes to keeping your young loved ones safe.

Here are a few ways you can protect your kids and prevent them from purchasing drugs online*:

1. **Keep the communication lines open.** Make sure to always have an open line of communication with your young loved ones. Let them keep you in the know about their friends, what's happening in their school, their interests, and more. Being close to him or her also helps you to notice changes in behavior that could point to drug use.
2. **Make sure they know the consequences.** Because the drugs can be so readily available online, kids may believe that they aren't really that dangerous. But many times, dealers will lace pills with other substances (like fentanyl) that will increase the drug's potency and make its consumption even more dangerous. In addition to possible overdose, using and buying drugs can lead to other consequences. There have been cases where someone has been sentenced to prison for giving a pill to someone who later overdosed.
3. **Check out their "searches" (if you suspect drug use).** Look through their browser or Google searches (on their computer or cell phones). Keep an eye out for any "How to buy ____ online" - type searches. Bring up anything that causes strong suspicion. This may be an uncomfortable conversation and you may also be accused of spying (which you *are* technically doing). But be sure to let him or her know that you are worried and only want to keep them safe. Make sure you point out recent cases in the news about young people overdosing on drugs. You may also want to invest in one of these "Parental-Control and Monitoring Apps."
4. **Monitor their delivered packages (if you suspect drug use).** Drugs are often delivered in unmarked and discreet packages. If you find your loved one getting such mail, or packages that you don't expect, ask them about it. You may want to stick around when they are opening the package.

With drugs being more accessible than ever, the most important things you can do are to educate yourself on the potential danger while maintaining a good relationship with your teen.