

WHAT IS FENTANYL?



Fentanyl is a powerful painkiller that is often used to control intense pain from cancer and surgery. It is an opioid, like morphine and heroin, but it is up to 100 times stronger. There are

strict guidelines for prescribing legal fentanyl, but illegal street fentanyl is widely available and is uncontrolled. There is a significant problem of abuse, dependence, and deadly overdose with fentanyl.

HOW IS FENTANYL TAKEN?

Fentanyl comes in many forms, including powder, tablets, skin patches and laced blotter paper. Users snort, inject, or swallow it, or place blotter paper in their mouths for the fentanyl to be absorbed. Fentanyl may also be mixed with other drugs such as cocaine, marijuana, Xanax, and other opioids like heroin.



There is no way for users to know if a drug has been laced with fentanyl. This can increase the risk of overdose and death. Public health officials believe that fentanyl mixed with other illicit drugs is the #1 reason for increased overdose in the last few years.

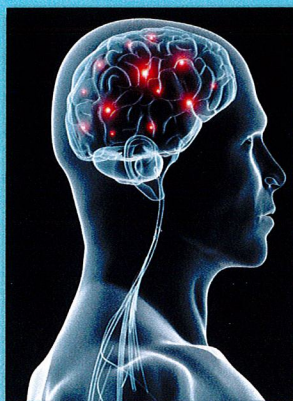
Fentanyl doesn't have any particular color, taste or odor, which makes it impossible to identify whether or not a drug has been laced with it.

Short-Term Effects

Fentanyl, like all opioid drugs, works by binding to specific parts of the brain called the opioid receptors. Immediate effects include:

**Euphoria • Relaxation • Drowsiness
Confusion • Nausea • Constipation
Respiratory Depression
Coma • Unconsciousness • Death**

WHAT DOES FENTANYL DO TO YOUR BRAIN?



Taking an opioid drug like fentanyl changes the chemistry of your brain. After fentanyl binds to opioid receptors in your brain, these receptors flood your brain's reward centers with dopamine. This surge of dopamine creates a sense of euphoria and extreme relaxation. Opioid receptors, in addition to being responsible for managing pain, are also responsible for breathing.

Most overdose deaths occur because the users' breathing slows down and then stops.

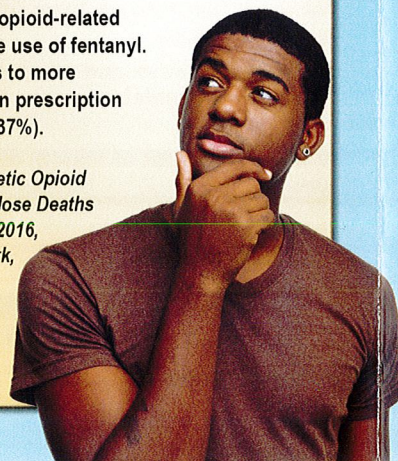
Fentanyl and the Opioids Epidemic

According to the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, opioid overdoses killed more than 42,000 people in the U.S. in 2016.

Opioid-related overdose deaths have taken a terrible toll on families and communities, killing more people than motor vehicle accidents per year.

In 2016, nearly half of all opioid-related deaths (46%) involved the use of fentanyl. Fentanyl now contributes to more opioid-related deaths than prescription opioids (40%) or heroin (37%).

Source: *Changes in Synthetic Opioid Involvement in Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States, 2010-2016*, Jones et. al., JAMA Network, May 1, 2018.
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2679931>



Heroin vs. Fentanyl

Heroin was developed by scientists at the Bayer company in 1897 in an effort to find a less addictive drug than morphine for treating painful diseases.

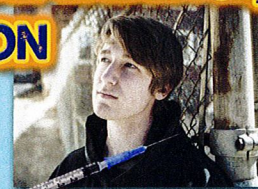
However, heroin turned out to be 10 times more potent—and addictive—than morphine.

Fentanyl was invented in 1959 as a new and even stronger painkiller—100 times stronger!

Unlike heroin, which is derived from poppy plants, fentanyl can be manufactured in illicit labs, and it is often easier to transport because it is more concentrated.

TOLERANCE, DEPENDENCE, AND ADDICTION

All opioids are highly addictive, and fentanyl is no exception.



That's because the drug activates a part of the brain called the "reward center," which leads to pleasurable feelings. Normally, the reward center serves to reinforce positive behaviors, like eating delicious food. But fentanyl hijacks this part of the brain, causing an initial euphoric high that makes users want to keep using.

Over time, the brain adapts to the drug, so that users need to take more of it to get the same high. This is called **tolerance**. Eventually, the body starts to need the drug to function normally—called **dependence**—and users will experience physical withdrawal symptoms, such as muscle twitching and insomnia, if they stop taking the drug. For some people, the problem progresses to **addiction**, which is characterized by a compulsive need to keep using the drug, despite negative consequences on work, school, and family life.

Street Names for Fentanyl

**APACHE CHINA GIRL
CHINA WHITE GOODFELLA
Dance Fever Jackpot
MURDER 8 Tango & Cash TNT**

Carfentanil:

More Dangerous Than Fentanyl

Carfentanil is an opioid drug similar to fentanyl. Street names are:

€.50 Drop Dead SERIAL KILLER

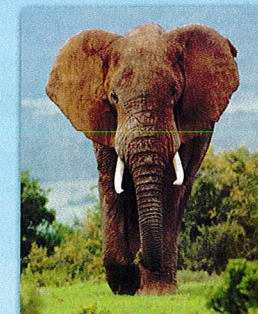
It has the greatest potency of any commercially available opioid in the world, at **10,000 times** the strength of morphine, **100 times** more powerful than fentanyl.



A tiny dose (equivalent to a few grains of table salt) can kill.

Carfentanil is so powerful that it is used as an elephant sedative. Because of its extreme potency it is only appropriate for use in large animals and not intended for humans.

It can be easily absorbed through the skin, as well as inhaled, posing a huge risk to anyone who might accidentally come into contact with it.





In 2016, **synthetic opioids** were involved in **19,413** of opioid-related deaths, up from **3,007** in 2010.

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/infographics/fentanyl-other-synthetic-opioids-drug-overdose-deaths>

Three Who Died

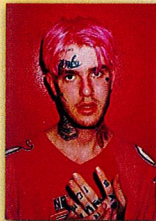


Medical examiners determined that pop icon **Prince** died from an accidental fentanyl overdose in April 2016. He was found alone and unresponsive in the elevator of his Paisley Park Estate. He was 57 years old.

Tom Petty, a music hall of fame rocker, died of a fentanyl overdose on October 2, 2017. He was taking fentanyl and other opioids to manage the pain from his broken hip. He was found alive but unconscious in his Malibu, California home. He was rushed to the hospital and put on life support but doctors found he had no brain activity. He was 66 years old.



Picture Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Petty#/media/File:Tom_Petty.jpg



Singer, actor, emo/hip-hop You Tube star, **Lil Peep**, died of an accidental overdose of fentanyl and Xanax on November 15, 2017. He was 21 years old and was just coming into his own.

Picture Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lil_Peep#/media/File:Lil-Peep_PrettyPuke_Photoshoot.png



Know the Signs of an Overdose

If someone you know overdoses on fentanyl, his or her life depends on quick medical attention. Here's how to recognize a possible overdose:

pinpoint pupils

Extreme drowsiness or unconsciousness

Respiratory depression (slow, shallow breathing)

BLUE LIPS OR FINGERNAILS

CHOKING OR GURGLING SOUNDS



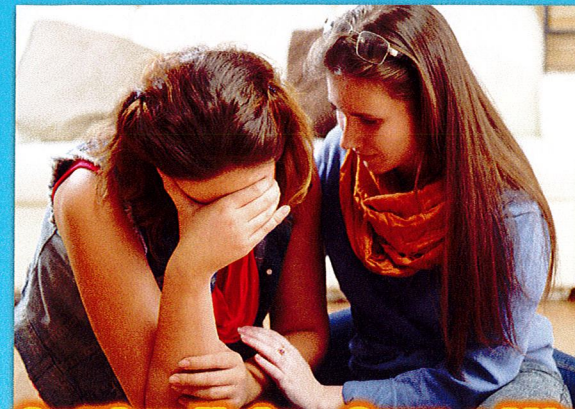
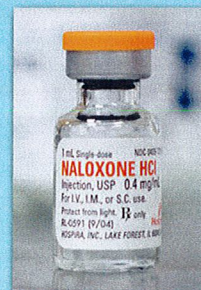
If you suspect an overdose, call 911 immediately.

Try to keep the person awake if you can, and roll him or her on his/her side to prevent choking.

Source: CDC, World Health Organization

TREATING OVERDOSE WITH NALOXONE

Naloxone (brand names NARCAN and EVZIO) is a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose. Federal and local governments are intensifying their efforts to distribute naloxone to hospitals, police officers, EMTs, and other emergency workers. Prevention, treatment, and education are critical to fighting the epidemic.



Getting Help – Save a Life

If someone you know is using fentanyl, encourage him or her to seek professional help. For information and referrals, call:

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Treatment Referral Helpline
800-662-HELP

The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information
800-729-6686

For More Information

American Society of Addiction Medicine
www.asam.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
www.cdc.gov

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
www.dea.gov

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
www.drugabuse.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.hhs.gov

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SPOTLIGHT on

Fentanyl

