

Fentanyl FAQ



WHAT IS FENTANYL?

Fentanyl is a potent synthetic drug in the opioid class of substances. Fentanyl is most often prescribed to individuals for treatment of severe pain. Fentanyl is also manufactured illicitly; however, these formulations are variable due to an unregulated supply.

IS ALL FENTANYL THE SAME?

No, fentanyl comes in different formulations and dosages. Pharmaceutical fentanyl is regulated for medicinal use and is different from illicit fentanyl. While both can potentially cause overdose, illicit fentanyl is often mixed or cut with various other adulterants, which can lead to added risks or unwanted side effects.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A FENTANYL OVERDOSE?

An individual experiencing a fentanyl overdose may be unconscious and not respond to stimuli. Other signs of a an opioid overdose include shallow or no breathing, blue lips or skin, and gurgling or choking noises.

DOES NALOXONE (NARCAN) WORK WITH FENTANYL OVERDOSES?

Yes, naloxone can reverse the symptoms of a fentanyl overdose. Fentanyl is an opioid and naloxone specifically reverses the symptoms of opioid overdoses. Because fentanyl is a more potent opioid, it may take longer for the naloxone to work, or a second dose may have to be administered.

CAN TOUCHING FENTANYL CAUSE AN OVERDOSE?

No, you cannot overdose on fentanyl by touching it. Fentanyl powders or pills are a different formulation from a transdermal patch, which requires skin surface area, moisture, and a longer amount of time for absorption to take place.

CAN SECONDHAND SMOKE FROM FENTANYL CAUSE AN OVERDOSE?

Occasionally, if someone feels sick after possible smoke exposure, it could be due to the smell from vaporized adulterants in the fentanyl or from anxiety from perceived risk of exposure.

HOW DO FENTANYL TEST STRIPS REDUCE THE RISK OF OVERDOSE?

Using fentanyl test strips allows for individuals to make more informed choices when using substances. Studies have shown that individuals who receive a positive fentanyl test strip result are known to engage in various harm reduction practices, including using smaller amounts of the substance, ensuring the presence of naloxone when using, using with others present, or disposing of it altogether.

ARE FENTANYL DEALERS TARGETING CHILDREN BY ADDING IT TO HALLOWEEN CANDY?

There is little to no evidence that children get fentanyl (or any potentially harmful substances) in their Halloween candy or that they are being targeted. Additionally, "rainbow" colored substances are not new and have been manufactured both legally and illegally in multiple colors for decades.

ORDER NALOXONE AT [NMHARMREDUCTION.ORG](https://nmharmreduction.org)