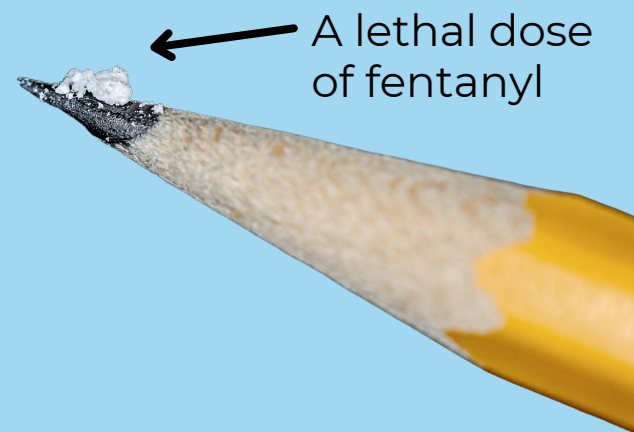


# FENTANYL FACTS

Fentanyl is an addictive, powerful synthetic opioid used to treat severe pain and is also increasingly found in the illicit drug market in recent years. It is 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine.<sup>1,2</sup> There are two types of fentanyl: pharmaceutical fentanyl and illegally made fentanyl (IMF). Opioid overdoses are increasingly driven by IMF.<sup>3</sup>

## Why is illegally made fentanyl so dangerous?

Even in small amounts, fentanyl can be deadly.<sup>3</sup> IMF is often added to drugs like heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA (i.e., Ecstasy, Molly), or made into fake prescription pills like Xanax, oxycodone, hydrocodone, and Adderall.<sup>2,3,4</sup> Because of its extreme potency, fentanyl contaminated drugs are cheaper, stronger, more addictive, and more dangerous. Many people are not aware that their drugs are laced with fentanyl.<sup>3</sup>



## Can someone tell if fentanyl is present in a drug?

Drugs can have deadly levels of fentanyl without being able to see, smell, or taste it. It's almost impossible to know if drugs are contaminated with IMF unless they are tested with fentanyl test strips. Test strips are cheap and provide quick results but may not detect more potent fentanyl-like drugs like carfentanil.<sup>3</sup>

## Do people who intentionally take fentanyl know the risks?

A person can knowingly take fentanyl, but not know if it contains a lethal dose.<sup>5</sup> It's impossible to know the potency of IMF because production is not an exact science and doses are inconsistent.<sup>3,5,6</sup>

## Is it risky to touch fentanyl or items where it is present?

No, fentanyl is not readily absorbed through the skin. It is easily absorbed through a mucus membrane or the bloodstream.<sup>7,8</sup> While fentanyl skin patches can be prescribed for pain management, this is not the formulation that is cut into other substances.<sup>7</sup>

## Can fentanyl overdose be reversed?

Yes, naloxone is a life-saving medication that can reverse an overdose from opioids—including fentanyl. Since fentanyl is stronger than other opioids, it may require multiple doses of naloxone.<sup>2</sup> Naloxone should be administered right away even if you're unsure if someone is overdosing on opioids.



GET MORE  
FENTANYL FACTS

## REFERENCES

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