

THE FACTS *about* Fentanyl

What is it?

It is a **SYNTHETIC OPIOID** that is up to

50x stronger than heroin & **100x** stronger than morphine

! It is a **major contributor** to fatal and nonfatal overdoses in the U.S.¹

+ It is **often added to other drugs** because of its extreme potency, which makes drugs cheaper, more powerful, more addictive, and more dangerous.

2 TYPES: Both are considered synthetic opioids.

🧪 **Pharmaceutical** fentanyl is prescribed by doctors to treat severe pain, especially after surgery and for advanced-stage cancer.

🚫 **Illicitly manufactured** fentanyl is distributed through illegal drug markets and makes up **most recent cases of fentanyl-related overdose.**

96% of WSU respondents said they have never used an opioid that wasn't prescribed to them, according to NCHA data.

Difficult to Detect

Many people may be unaware that their drugs are **LACED WITH FENTANYL** because...

1. it is nearly impossible to tell unless you use **TESTING STRIPS** on your drugs, which

\$ are **inexpensive**

⌚ typically give **results within 5 minutes**

❤️ can be the difference between **life** or death

✓ are **decriminalized** in Kansas

2. illicitly manufactured fentanyl is available on the drug market in different **FORMS**, like

💊 **Powdered** fentanyl¹ looks like many other drugs. It is commonly mixed with drugs like heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine and made into pills that are made to resemble other prescription opioids.

👉 **Liquid** fentanyl can be found in nasal sprays, eye drops, or dropped onto paper like small candies.

Even if the test is negative, **caution** should be taken as test strips might not detect more potent fentanyl-life drugs, like carfentanil.³

You Can Help

Even in small doses, it can be **DEADLY**.

150 people die every day from overdoses related to synthetic opioids like fentanyl.²

Recognizing the **SIGNS OF OVERDOSE** can save a life. Here are some things to look for:

- Small, constricted “pinpoint **pupils**”
- Falling asleep or losing **consciousness**
- Slow, weak, or no **breathing**
- Choking or gurgling **sounds**
- Limp **body**
- Cold, clammy, and/or discolored **skin**

Additional **TIPS** from **ValleyHope**:

- **Always assume** that any pill or drug that is not purchased directly from a pharmacy or provided in a medical setting, likely contains fentanyl.
- **Carry** the nasal spray version of naloxone (generic naloxone, Narcan, Kloxxado) and make sure you know how to use it.
- **Learn** how to recognize an overdose and additional steps to take.
- **Educate** your family, friends and community about the dangers of fentanyl and encourage anyone struggling with substance use disorder to seek immediate help.

If you aren’t sure whether a person is high or experiencing an overdose, treat the situation like an overdose. You could save a life. Here’s **WHAT TO DO**:



1. Call 911 immediately.*



2. Administer naloxone,** if available.

DCCCA is providing free naloxone (Narcan) nasal spray and training to community organizations and any Kansas resident. Request a naloxone kit at dcca.org.



3. Try to keep the person awake and breathing.



4. Lay the person on their side to prevent choking.



5. Stay with them until emergency workers arrive.

Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988
- United Way treatment resources at 211
- wichita.edu/prevention

Information was adapted from a handout from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

1. Wilson N, Karlisa M, Seth P, Smith H 4th, Davis NL, Drug and opioid-involved overdose deaths-United States, 2017-2018, MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:290-7. 10.15585/mmwr.mm6911a4

2. NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Estimates for 2020 are based on provisional data. Estimates for 2015-2019 are based on final data (available from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm>).

3. Bergh, Marianne Skov-Skov et al, “Selectivity and sensitivity of urine fentanyl test strips to detect fentanyl analogues in illicit drugs.” The International journal on drug

policy vol. 90 (2021): <https://doi.org/10.1016./j.drugpo.2020.103065>

* Most states have laws that may protect a person who is overdosing or the person who called for help from legal trouble. ** Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can reverse the effects of opioid overdose and save lives. It is available in all 50 states and can be purchased from a local pharmacy without a prescription in most states.

 **HOPE Services**
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