

THE DEADLIEST DRUG



HOW IS IT MISUSED?

Fentanyl can be injected, snorted/sniffed, smoked, taken orally by pill or tablet, and spiked onto blotter paper. Fentanyl patches are abused by removing its gel contents and then injecting or consuming the contents. Illicitly produced fentanyl is sold alone or in combination with heroin and other substances. It has been identified in counterfeit pills, mimicking pharmaceutical drugs like oxycodone.

WHAT IS FENTANYL?

Fentanyl is a very strong synthetic opioid drug that is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin. Fentanyl is widely used in emergency rooms and hospitals, and it can also be prescribed. However, recent fentanyl-related deaths are linked to illegally made drugs.

WHY IS IT SO DANGEROUS?

Because just 2mg (0.0000044 lbs) is enough to be lethal, the mixture of fentanyl with other substances can quickly lead to a fatal overdose without anyone even knowing that they have consumed it. Fentanyl cannot be smelled or tasted, making it nearly impossible to tell if drugs contain fentanyl without special fentanyl test strips.

More than two thirds (68%) of the reported 107,081 drug overdose deaths in the US involved synthetic opioids like illegally manufactured fentanyl.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

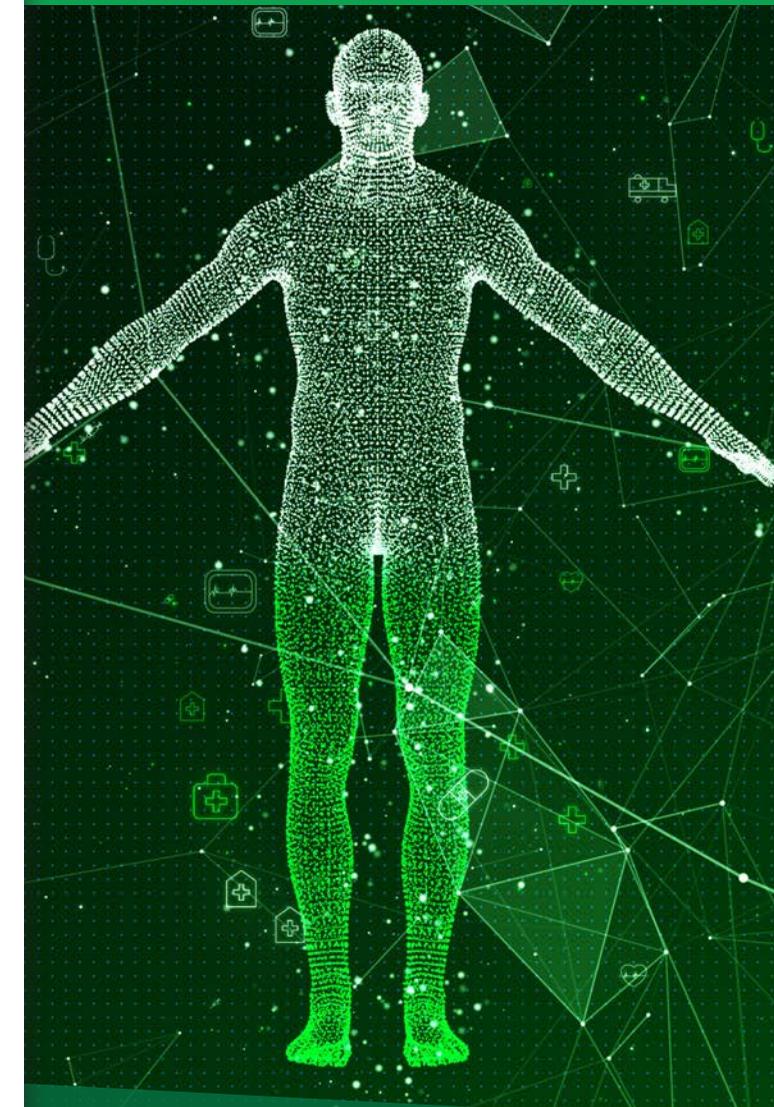
www.samhsa.gov

in the know

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FENTANYL

HOW IT AFFECTS THE BODY

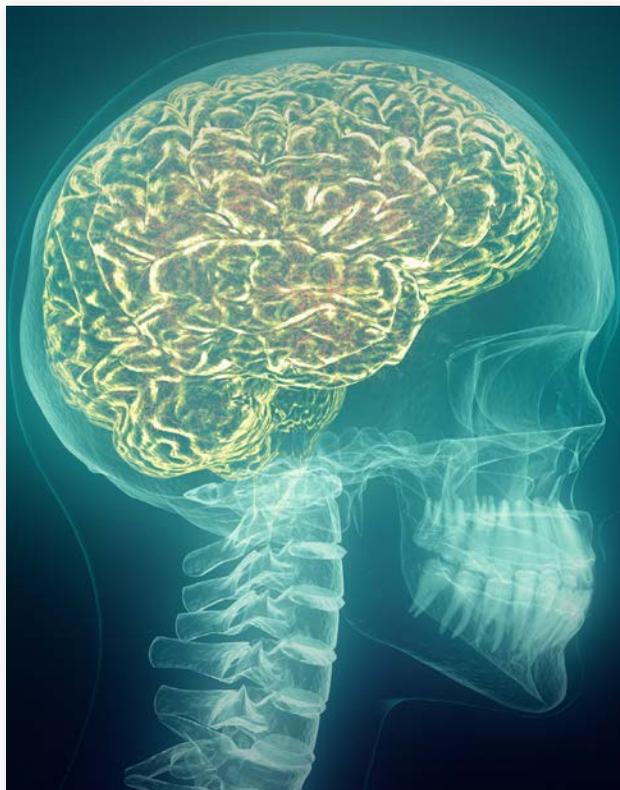


HOW DOES FENTANYL AFFECT THE BODY?

Fentanyl affects everyone differently, based on:

- Size, weight, and health
- Whether the person is used to taking it
- Whether other drugs are taken around the same time
- Amount taken
- Strength of the drug (varies between drug form e.g. patches, lozenges or injection)

Overdose risk factors include changes in tolerance from not using or using less, mixing with other depressants like alcohol, and a history of past overdoses.



SIDE EFFECTS

The side effects of fentanyl are similar to those of other opioids:

- Rash or skin reaction from a fentanyl patch
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Constipation
- Relaxation
- Headaches
- Euphoria
- Dizziness
- Pain relief
- Fatigue or drowsiness
- Sedation
- Loss of appetite
- Confusion

THE BRAIN

Research on fentanyl's effects on the brain has shown that the drug impairs people's breathing before other noticeable changes and before they lose consciousness. It begins to impair breathing about four minutes before there is any change in alertness. This explains why fentanyl has been so deadly during the opioid epidemic. It affects a person's breathing before they know it is happening.

ADDICTION

Because of its potency, fentanyl is addictive. A person taking prescription fentanyl as instructed by a doctor can experience dependence, which is characterized by withdrawal symptoms when the drug is stopped. A person can be dependent on a substance without being addicted, but dependence can sometimes lead to addiction.

Addiction to fentanyl can result in compulsively seeking the drug and difficulty controlling use, despite harmful consequences. When someone is addicted, they continue to use fentanyl even though it can cause health problems or issues at work, school, or home. Addiction can range from mild to severe.



WITHDRAWAL

People addicted to fentanyl who stop using it can have severe withdrawal symptoms. These symptoms can begin as early as a few hours after the drug was last taken. These symptoms include:

- Muscle and bone pain
- Sleep problems
- Diarrhea and vomiting
- Cold flashes with goose bumps
- Uncontrollable leg movements
- Severe cravings for the drug

These symptoms can be extremely uncomfortable and are the reason many people find it so difficult to stop taking fentanyl.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF AN OVERDOSE?

A fentanyl overdose may result in:

- Stupor
- Small, constricted "pinpoint pupils"
- Clammy skin
- Limp body
- Cyanosis – skin, lips, or nails turn blue due to a lack of oxygen
- Loss of consciousness
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds

HOW TO REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF AN OVERDOSE

In the case of an overdose, Naloxone (also known as Narcan®) reverses the effects of opiates (including fentanyl). Naloxone is available over the counter and is available either as a fast-acting nasal spray or a preloaded multiple dose syringe.

If you suspect that someone has overdosed on fentanyl, DO NOT HESITATE, CALL 9-1-1!

