



WHAT IS FENTANYL?

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 50-100 times stronger than morphine. Pharmaceutical fentanyl was developed for pain management treatment for people recovering from surgery or those with chronic conditions such as cancer. Because of its powerful heroin-like effects, fentanyl is also abused and sold on the street. Many users believe they are purchasing heroin or other drugs but are actually purchasing deadly fentanyl. Just two milligrams of fentanyl, which is equal to 10-15 grains of table salt, is considered a lethal dose.



UNDER THE RAINBOW

Illicitly manufactured fentanyl is often made into pills that have mostly been blue. These are intended to counterfeit oxycodone, a much weaker opioid. However, the pills can be found in a variety of colors, and it has become popular for the pills to be made in colors ranging across the rainbow spectrum. It can also be found in a powdery form that resembles sidewalk chalk.



These colorful pills can make the drug appear less dangerous to some users, even though fentanyl is currently the deadliest drug in circulation. A child may mistake the drug for candy and teens may not realize how dangerous fentanyl can be when it looks so innocent.

IT'S SERIOUS

Fentanyl remains the deadliest drug threat facing the United States. Over a given year, more than 70,000 people die from fentanyl overdose. It is often laced into other drugs such as cocaine, heroin and MDMA (molly). The results are often fatal.

“The first time could be your last time. One pill can kill.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

www.cdc.gov/opioids/index.html

in the know

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RAINBOW FENTANYL

A Spectrum of Danger





EFFECT ON THE BRAIN

Fentanyl is an opioid which means it affects areas of the body that control breathing, pain reception and motor skills. It affects the brainstem, which controls functions like breathing and heart rate. It acts on the limbic system, which controls emotions, and it acts on the spinal cord which affects how the brain receives messages from other parts of the body. Fentanyl slows down nearly every aspect of your body and can slow it to the point of stopping your heartrate and breathing—resulting in death.

SHORT-TERM EFFECTS

When users ingest fentanyl, they often believe it to be a different drug. But side effects can help identify what the user has taken. Effects include:

- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Small pupils
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Slowed breathing

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

The most dangerous thing about fentanyl is how quickly it can cause its users to overdose. There are dangerous side effects if users abuse small amounts over time:

- Injury due to falls
- Chronic and severe constipation leading to bowel obstruction
- Breathing problems during sleep
- Heart attack and heart failure
- Immune system suppression
- Hormonal and reproductive issues in both men and women
- Anxiety, depression and other mental disorders

ADDICTION

A person who takes fentanyl or other opioids long-term will become increasingly tolerant to their effects, which means they will need to take more of the drug to



“Over a given year, Fentanyl killed more than 70,000 people. Don’t become another statistic in this deadly epidemic.”

feel the same effects. Signs of addiction include:

- Taking more opioids than you intended
- Taking fentanyl or other opioids despite knowing it makes emotional or physical problems worse
- Using opioids in high-risk situations such as while driving
- Failing to meet responsibilities at home, school or work due to fentanyl or other opioid use
- Experiencing relationship problems due to abuse
- Spending a great deal of time acquiring, using and recovering from the drug
- Giving up previously important activities to use the drug
- Trying and failing to quit
- Experiencing cravings

WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal occurs when a person who is addicted to a drug abruptly stops intake. Withdrawal makes users feel sick and leads to cravings for more of the drug. Symptoms include:

- Overall achiness
- Anxiety
- Excessive sweating
- Insomnia



- Diarrhea
- Cramping
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dilated pupils
- Rapid heartrate
- High blood pressure

OVERDOSE

Overdose from fentanyl is extremely deadly. It kills tens of thousands every year. If you or someone you know experiences any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately.

- Tiny pupils
- Loss of consciousness
- Shallow, irregular or stopped breathing
- Limp body
- Blue, cold or pale skin
- Choking or gurgling noises

DEADLY IN ANY SHADE

Regardless of the form, fentanyl can and will kill you. It’s still deadly even when it looks like a harmless piece of candy. The best way to avoid fentanyl is to avoid drug use altogether. Don’t become another statistic in the opioid epidemic.