

What is Fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid—100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin (DEA, 2022). Illicit fentanyl is typically manufactured in Mexico and trafficked into the U.S., often mixed into counterfeit pills and powders without the user's knowledge. Even a tiny amount can cause an overdose.

A National Shift: Overdose Deaths Declining

Positive Trends → The CDC reports that, nationally, the overall drug overdose death rate decreased by 4.0% between 2022 and 2023 (CDC, 2024).

A 24% Drop in Overdose Deaths → Data from the CDC's National Vital Statistics System indicates that drug overdose deaths, nationally, fell nearly 24% between 2023 and 2024, reducing from 114,000 deaths to approximately 87,000 (CDC, 2024).

Why the Decline? → Widespread naloxone distribution, increased access to treatment, and changes in the illegal drug supply have helped reverse previous trends.

What Does Fentanyl Look Like?

Fentanyl comes in multiple forms, including:

- Powder
- Pressed Counterfeit Pills—often designed to look like prescription drugs such as Oxycodone, Xanax, and Adderall (Nevada HIDTA, 2022). Pills are now seen in a rainbow of colors, believed to target youth (DEA, 2022).
- Liquid
- Crystal
- Capsules

Fentanyl is colorless, odorless, and is frequently mixed into other drugs like heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and ecstasy without the dealer's or user's knowledge (Arizona HIDTA, 2022).



How Can You Help Reduce the Risk?

- Assume all pills not obtained from a doctor or pharmacy contain fentanyl.
- Never buy pills online or on social media—dealers may not even know what they're selling.
- Know the signs of an opioid overdose and act fast.
- If you suspect someone is using illegal drugs, speak up before it's too late.

If Someone is Overdosing:

- Call EMS immediately
- Administer naloxone (Narcan) if available
- If naloxone is unavailable, perform rescue breathing or CPR until help arrives

Signs of an Opioid Overdose

- Pinpoint pupils
- Extreme drowsiness or unconsciousness
- Slow, shallow, or no breathing
- Cold, clammy skin
- Gray/blue skin, fingernails, or lips
- Gurgling or snoring sounds

Find Help & More Resources

- Call 988 for confidential support.
- Visit Don'tRiskItAll.com for more information.



Sources

- Southern Nevada Health District fentanyl overdose statistics (2024)
- CDC National Vital Statistics System (2024)
- Nevada HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) reports (2022)
- Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) fentanyl public safety warnings (2022)
- Arizona HIDTA fentanyl expert resources ([AZ HIDTA](https://AZHIDTA.org), 2022)
- Oregon-Idaho HIDTA Community Threat Bulletin (April 2022)