

FENTANYL:

What You Need to Know

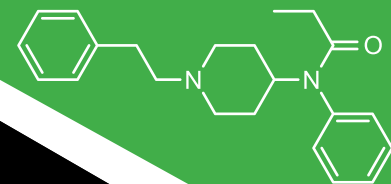
AUTHENTIC
oxycodone M30
tablets



COUNTERFEIT
oxycodone M30
tablets containing
fentanyl



Counterfeit medication can be very difficult to distinguish from legitimate medication.



WHAT IS FENTANYL?

- Fentanyl is a prescription drug that is also made and used illegally.
- Pharmaceutical prescription fentanyl is used in surgery or to treat patients with severe pain.
- The main public health concern is over illegally manufactured fentanyl and related compounds.
- Fentanyl can be made or distributed in different forms, including liquid and powder, making it easily blended with other drugs, including pressed into fake pills. The fake pills may look like prescription opioids or anti-anxiety medications (see photo above).

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF FENTANYL?

- According to the CDC, over 100 people die every day in the United States from overdoses involving synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Fentanyl is involved in about 61% of the 80,000 overdose deaths each year.¹
- Fentanyl is about 50 times stronger than heroin, which means it is more likely to cause overdose.
- About 2 milligrams of fentanyl is considered a lethal dose.

That's only about the size of 5-7 grains of salt.

DID YOU KNOW THAT XYLAZINE, ALSO KNOWN AS "TRANQ" IS OFTEN MIXED WITH ILLICIT OPIOIDS, INCLUDING FENTANYL?

- In 2024, 21% of people who tested positive for fentanyl also tested positive for xylazine.²
- The presence of xylazine and fentanyl in drugs may put individuals at a higher risk of a fatal overdose. Xylazine use can also lead to skin ulcers, abscesses, and related complications.

1. National Center for Health Statistics (US) (December 2024). National Vital Statistics System. Estimates for 2024 are based on provisional data. Estimates for 2015–2023 are based on final data. Accessed July 7, 2025 from: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/mortality_public_use_data.htm.

2. Millennium Health (February 2025). Shifting Tides: The Continued Evolution of the "Fourth Wave" of America's Overdose Crisis. Millennium Health Signals Report™, Volume 7. Accessed July 2, 2025 from <https://www.millenniumhealth.com/news/signals-report-7/>.



FENTANYL IS FREQUENTLY SUBSTITUTED FOR OR MIXED INTO OTHER DRUGS, AND OFTEN WITHOUT AN INDIVIDUAL KNOWING IT.



FENTANYL RESOURCES



Scan to learn more.

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION IMPORTANT FOR YOU?

- Today, substances sold through social media may contain fentanyl (fent, fetty, etc.) or xylazine (tranq) without the buyer knowing.
- Fentanyl overdoses among youth are on the rise. In 2020, 76% of overdose deaths in 14- to 23-year-olds involved fentanyl.
- From 2019 to 2021, overdose deaths among teens ages 15 to 19 more than doubled. **Teen drug use did not increase — the drug supply became more dangerous.**
- In 2023, 1,589 teens aged 15-19 died of a drug overdose. Fentanyl was involved in 79% of those deaths.
- **Using more than one drug at a time is called polysubstance use.** Mixing drugs can be more dangerous than using one drug alone, and possibly more deadly. To learn more, visit www.cdc.gov/stop-overdose/caring/polysubstance-use.html.
- It is nearly impossible to tell if drugs contain fentanyl or xylazine without using test strips or other drug checking methods. However, not all dangerous additives are detected by standard drug checking methods.

HOW CAN YOU KEEP YOURSELF AND OTHERS SAFE?

- Overdose can affect anyone. It can be scary, but learning about these drugs and knowing the steps to take can help save someone's life.
- Naloxone, also known as **Narcan**, and nalmefene are life-saving medications that can reverse opioid overdose. They are safe to use even if no opioids are present.
- Naloxone is the only opioid reversal drug that is available in nasal spray form.
- Watch **How to Use Naloxone:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=odIFtGNjmMQ
- **Test for fentanyl with test strips**, small strips of paper that detect fentanyl in other drugs (cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, etc.):
 - › Can test pills, powder, and injectables
 - › Reduce accidental exposures
- Fentanyl test strip availability varies by state.
 - › Contact your local health department or harm reduction agency to learn more.
- Check for overdose symptoms.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF OPIOID OVERDOSE CAN SAVE A LIFE.

LOOK FOR:

- › Small, constricted "pinpoint pupils"
- › Falling asleep or losing consciousness
- › Slow breathing, weak breathing, or no breathing
- › Choking or gurgling sounds
- › Limp body
- › Discolored skin (blue or purple lips and nails)

IF YOU THINK SOMEONE IS EXPERIENCING A DRUG OVERDOSE:

- › Call 911 immediately
- › Administer an overdose reversal medication, such as naloxone or nalmefene
- › Lay the person on their side to prevent choking
- › Don't leave the person until medical help arrives

SAVE A LIFE FROM OPIOID OVERDOSE
cdc.gov/rx-awareness/prevent

Resources for substance use disorder treatment:

To find treatment and service options near you, visit FindTreatment.gov, call the 24/7 National Helpline at 800-662-HELP (4357), or visit online at www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline.

