



Fentanyl & Counterfeit Pills

Facts & Information

REAL or FAKE? It's always a gamble. FAKE PILLS ARE OUT THERE.

If you didn't get it from your pharmacist or doctor, it might not be what you think it is.

It might be deadly.

What is Fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a Schedule II synthetic opioid approved for use as a painkiller and anesthetic. The drug's extremely strong opioid properties—both analgesic and euphoric—have made it an attractive drug of abuse for opioid users. It is the most potent opioid available for use in medical treatment – 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times stronger than heroin. Its euphoric effects are indistinguishable from morphine or heroin.



Two milligrams of powder fentanyl, a potentially lethal dose

WARNING: Ingestion of very small doses of fentanyl can be fatal. Fentanyl can be absorbed through the skin and accidental inhalation of airborne powder also may occur.

Fentanyl in the United States

The United States is in the midst of a fentanyl crisis, with law enforcement reporting and public health data indicating higher availability of fentanyl, increased seizures of fentanyl, and more known overdose deaths from fentanyl than at any other time since the drug was first created in 1959. Illicitly-produced fentanyl, along with its analogues, is manufactured in China and Mexico.

Counterfeit fentanyl pills

Illicitly-produced fentanyl is increasingly available in the form of counterfeit prescription pills. Fentanyl traffickers use fentanyl powder and pill presses to produce pills that resemble popular prescription drugs, such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and Xanax®. The pills are sold in illicit U.S. drug markets, and users typically do not realize the pills are laced with fentanyl. The amount of fentanyl intended for each tablet is very small, and operators risk creating hot spots, or areas of higher concentrations of fentanyl in the pills. DEA's analysis of 8 kilograms of fentanyl tablets indicated the average illicit fentanyl-laced tablet contained 1.1 milligrams of fentanyl, with a range of 0.03 to 1.9 milligram per tablet. Such a large amount of fentanyl in each pill is alarming considering that approximately 2 milligrams is a lethal dose for most non-opioid-dependent individuals.



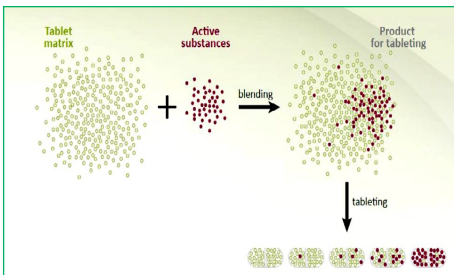
Counterfeit 30 milligram Oxycodone pills containing fentanyl

Drug users have discussed only consuming partial amounts of a counterfeit pill containing fentanyl in online forums, and one user stated he began vomiting after taking one-quarter of a pill.

The high profitability of counterfeit prescription pills laced with fentanyl strongly incentivizes traffickers to continue producing them. These pills often retail for between \$10 and \$20 in illicit street markets, potentially netting traffickers millions of dollars in profit.

Where fentanyl has been found

Currently illicit fentanyl, fentanyl-related substances, and other synthetic opioids can resemble powdered drugs such as heroin or cocaine. Fentanyl, or other synthetic opioids, in pill or capsule form have been represented as OxyContin (oxycodone), Xanax (alprazolam), or other diverted pharmaceutical drugs. Fentanyl intended for use in powder form is likely still marketed towards heroin users, while fentanyl-laced pills can be marketed towards prescription drug users. Fentanyl has also been found mixed with other illicit drugs, such as cocaine, or in black tar form that visually resembles black tar heroin.



Variable dose of active substance in clandestinely manufactured pills



Fentanyl in pill, black tar, and powder form

If exposed, Call 911; In case of overdose, Call 911 and administer Narcan (naloxone)