

Fentanyl

Experimenting with drugs is more dangerous than ever, with availability and use of one particularly dangerous opioid drug on the rise. It's name? Fentanyl.

Fentanyl was involved in almost 29 percent of all overdose deaths in 2016, making it the most commonly used drug in overdose fatalities. The rate of drug overdose deaths involving fentanyl jumped by about 113 percent each year from 2013 through 2016. It is a synthetic (man-made) drug that is 50-100 times more potent than morphine. This powerful analgesic drug is used to manage surgical, severe, or sometimes chronic pain in people who are tolerant to other opioids. The DEA classifies fentanyl as a Schedule II controlled substance and warns that it is regularly diverted from appropriate uses and abused. It is also commonly manufactured in clandestine laboratories for illicit distribution.

Fentanyl may be "cut" with other drugs or substances in order to make them go further. It has been found in heroin, meth, cocaine, crack cocaine, **and even marijuana**. Fentanyl can be up to 50 times stronger than heroin. While mixing fentanyl into heroin makes it cheaper, stronger, and potentially more desirable because it blocks pain receptors and increases dopamine, it also causes many adverse health impacts. Fentanyl can cause altered heartbeat, anxiety, muscle spasms, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, hallucinations, and stronger physical dependence and withdrawal. Individuals who are unaware of the presence of fentanyl in their heroin risk dying from asphyxiation. Just two milligrams—comparable to about two grains of salt—can be fatal.

Acrylfentanyl is five times more potent than heroin as a painkiller and hundreds of times more powerful than morphine. It is also called the Narcan-Resistant Strain of Fentanyl. Acrylfentanyl comes from China, Canada, and Mexico, and can be obtained on the dark web. Acrylfentanyl is a Schedule I drug; there is no medical use for this drug. It comes in a powder form and looks just like heroin and fentanyl. Drug dealers are cutting Acrylfentanyl with other drugs such as cocaine and heroin.

Even more potent, carfentanil is 100 times stronger than fentanyl and up to 4,000 times more potent than heroin. The drug was originally licensed for use as a sedative or tranquilizer for large animals like elephants. Until 2017, carfentanil was legal in China and companies used to sell it over the internet, even offering customers advice on how to import it. Carfentanil continues to be a problem around the world since it's cheap and easy to make. But even the smallest doses can be lethal to humans.

In addition to being added to substances such as cocaine and heroin, fentanyl and carfentanil can be made into pills that look like Percocet, OxyContin, or other prescription drugs.

There are so many risks with using or even experimenting with these types of drugs. Talk to your children about the dangers associated with any type of drug use to help prevent them from potentially obtaining a cheap high that could cost them their lives.

For more information, please visit our website at www.drugfreeadamscounty.org.