

Fentanyl:

Even in small doses, it can be deadly.

Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, is a leading factor in drug overdoses in the United States and involved in nearly all overdose deaths in the District of Columbia.

IN DC...

97% of opioid overdose deaths in 2023 involved fentanyl.

-DC Medical Examiner

FACT: FENTANYL IS EVERYWHERE IN DC.

Because it is extremely potent and cheap to make, fentanyl is in many of the drugs sold and used in DC. It is often mixed with other drugs – such as heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine – making them cheaper, more powerful, more addictive, and more dangerous.

Pills and powders can change hands many times before they are taken, so no one knows if they have fentanyl in them or how much.

Injected, snorted, swallowed, or smoked, fentanyl increases the risk of overdose.

FACT: FENTANYL IS MORE POWERFUL THAN HEROIN OR MORPHINE.

Fentanyl is 50 times more powerful than heroin and 100 times more powerful than morphine. In DC today, there is almost no pure heroin for sale, and people who use opioids often knowingly use fentanyl.

FACT: EVEN IN SMALL DOSES, FENTANYL CAN BE DEADLY.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration reports that fentanyl is the deadliest drug threat in the country. It is highly addictive, and only 2 milligrams – the amount that fits on the tip of a sharpened pencil – can be deadly. The presence of fentanyl can only be detected by test strips since it can't be seen, tasted, or smelled.

FACT: THERE IS A MEDICATION THAT CAN REVERSE A FENTANYL OVERDOSE.

Naloxone (NARCAN®) is an FDA-approved medication that rapidly reverses an overdose from fentanyl and other opioids. It is available as an injectable or nasal spray and can save a life when given in time.

The DC government encourages everyone to carry naloxone. In an emergency, residents can feel comfortable calling 911. DC has Good Samaritan laws that protect those who call emergency services even if drugs are on the scene.



Naloxone is available for all residents of the District.

Text **LiveLongDC** to **888-811** to find naloxone near you or have it delivered.

NO ID. NO COST. NO PRESCRIPTION.

Fentanyl:

Even in small doses, it can be deadly.

Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and legally by prescription, such as Percocet®, OxyContin®, Vicodin®, codeine, morphine, and many others.

FACT: THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF FENTANYL. ONE IS LEGAL, ONE ISN'T.

Pharmaceutical fentanyl is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for treating severe pain, such as after surgery or during late-stage cancer. Doctors may prescribe fentanyl as a shot, a skin patch, or a lozenge.

Illicitly manufactured fentanyl is associated with most overdoses. It is made in labs and distributed by drug dealers in many different forms: as a powder that is commonly mixed with other illegal drugs, and as a liquid that can be found in nasal sprays, eye drops, and dropped onto paper or small candies.

Both pharmaceutical fentanyl and illegally manufactured fentanyl are synthetic opioids.

FACT: A NEW THREAT ADDS TO FENTANYL'S DANGER.

Xylazine (zai-luh-zeen) – or “tranq” – is an animal tranquilizer added to street drugs to make them last longer. But mixed with opioids like fentanyl, tranq has serious risks, including a higher risk of dying. Naloxone can reverse a fentanyl overdose but does not stop the effects of tranq that may be mixed in. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is tracking xylazine and reports an increase in 2023 over past years.

FACT: THERE IS A QUICK WAY TO TEST FOR FENTANYL

Fentanyl test strips are available for people who use drugs to test for fentanyl in their heroin and other drugs such as crack, cocaine, opioid pills, and benzos. The test strips are easy to use--similar to other rapid tests for pregnancy or Covid-19-- and only require a small amount of the drug to determine if fentanyl is present. If present, the person using the drug can choose to use less, use with someone else, have naloxone ready, or not use at all. Like naloxone, fentanyl test strips are available for all residents of the District through the LiveLongDC text service.

Common street names for fentanyl include:

Apache, China Girl, China Town, Dance Fever, Friend, Goodfellas, Great Bear, He-Man, Jackpot, King Ivory, Murder 8, and Tango & Cash.

*Drug Enforcement Administration
(DEA)*