

FENTANYL

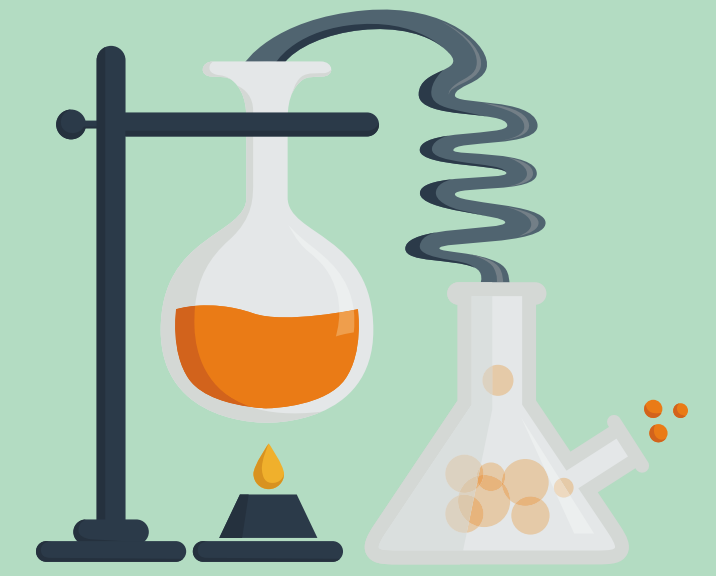
WHAT IS IT?



Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid analgesic, 50 to 100x more powerful than morphine.



Fentanyl can be found in prescription form, introduced to the medical community in the 1960s and prescribed to relieve severe pain post-surgery or during end-of-life care. In its prescription form, fentanyl is sold under the brand names Actiq®, Duragesic®, and Sublimaze®. When prescribed by a physician, fentanyl is often administered via injection, transdermal patch, or in lozenges.



Fentanyl analogues are now being created in clandestine laboratories to be sold and used illegally. In its non-prescription form, fentanyl is found in powder form, spiked on blotter paper; mixed with heroin; or as tablets that attempt to mimic other opioids.



Effects:

Euphoria, relaxation, drowsiness, nausea, confusion, constipation, sedation, tolerance, addiction, respiratory depression and arrest, unconsciousness, coma, and death.



Like other opioids, Fentanyl binds to opioid receptors in the reward centers of the brain, increasing dopamine levels to cause a surge in endorphins and feelings of pleasure.



Through Fentanyl's effects on the opioid receptors in the brain stem however, it can inhibit normal breathing, causing breathing to stop altogether, leading to death.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?



540%

increase in fentanyl overdose deaths since 2016 (CDC)

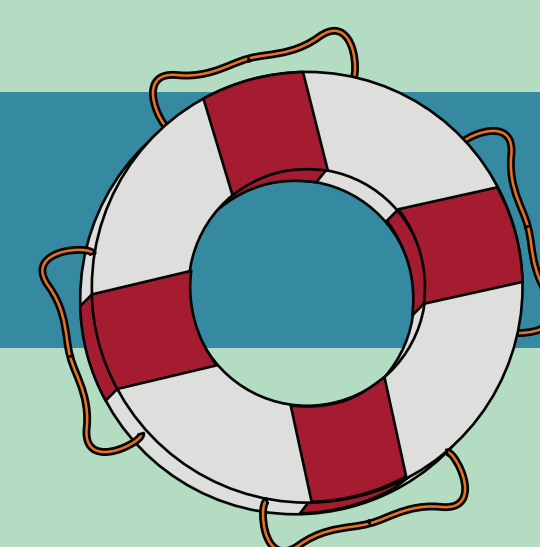
While the fast-acting nature of the effects of fentanyl may create a more powerful and immediate euphoria, these effects wear off faster, leading to the more immediate return of cravings and discomfort.

In talking about Fentanyl, you may hear about Carfentanil, a synthetic version of Fentanyl designed to be less expensive and more potent. Originally created for veterinarians to anesthetize large animals such as horses, it is 10,000x more potent than morphine and 1,000x more potent than Fentanyl.



With a high profit margin, Fentanyl is often mixed into heroin or is made to mimic the appearance of other opioids. Many individuals will not be aware that Fentanyl has been mixed into their heroin or other opioid, and Fentanyl is so powerful that a dose the size of grain of sand can be deadly.

WHAT CAN WE DO?



- Increase availability and accessibility of naloxone (Narcan)
- Increase funding for research on effective opioid treatment and recovery
- Increase collaboration between public health and public safety
- Increase availability and accessibility of opioid treatment
- Increase education and awareness of the dangers of Fentanyl

Overdoses of fentanyl can be reversed through the immediate administration of naloxone (Narcan). Note, Fentanyl overdoses may require higher doses to be administered due to the potency of the drug.