

## **Fentanyl**

Fatal overdoses due to people using drugs that unknowingly contain the powerful opioid fentanyl are on the rise, especially among teenagers and young adults. Fentanyl is 50 to 100 times more potent than heroin and has been found in numerous drugs, including non-opioids.

Drugs that have been found to contain fentanyl include heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and MDMA (molly/ecstasy). Fentanyl has also been found in counterfeit prescription drugs, like Percocet (generic name oxycodone), Adderall (dextroamphetamine/amphetamine), and Xanax (alprazolam).

To be clear, these prescription drugs containing fentanyl are fake. They are not provided by pharmacies or made by legitimate drug manufacturers. They are made in clandestine labs and sold to users under false pretenses.

### **What you can do:**

- The most effective way to avoid unknowingly using fentanyl is to not use any prescription drugs that are not prescribed to you, and to not use any illicit drugs.
- If you or someone you know is experiencing an overdose, call 9-1-1. University of Iowa Department of Public Safety police officers carry naloxone. Police officers are often first on the scene following a 9-1-1 call and can administer care while additional first responders arrive.
- Be able to recognize an opioid overdose. The classic signs of opioid overdose include someone who is unresponsive, breathing shallow or not at all, and has very small pupils. Visit <https://harmreduction.org/issues/overdose-prevention/overview/overdose-basics/recognizing-opioid-overdose/> for information on the signs and symptoms that can be seen in an overdose.
- Be prepared to reverse an overdose and save a life by having naloxone on hand. Naloxone is often referred to by its brand name, Narcan. Visit <https://www.naloxoneiowa.org/> for information on how to access and use free naloxone in Iowa.
- While fentanyl can be dangerous, it CANNOT be absorbed through your skin, so overdose by passive contact is not possible.
- If available and legal in your area, test your drugs with fentanyl test strips before using. (Fentanyl strips are considered drug paraphernalia and illegal in the state of Iowa).
- When using drugs, always use with a friend or let someone know that you are using so they can check on you to ensure your safety.

\*More information on fentanyl can be found at the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#).