

Fentanyl is an extremely dangerous drug and is being added to counterfeit pills that look like what one might get from a pharmacy but is purchased on the street and sold by drug traffickers. 2mg of fentanyl is considered a lethal dose. 40% of pills seized in the US contain more than 2mg of fentanyl.

It is a powerful synthetic opioid pain killer with a medical use BUT it also has a high potential for abuse. It is 50x more potent than heroin and 100x more potent than morphine. It comes in a liquid, a patch, or sucker (lollipop) form when it is used medically but IF IT IS SEEN IN A POWDER FORM it is an illicit / street drug.

Fentanyl is added to a variety of different drugs on the street such as oxycodone and Xanax. We are also seeing it added to heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine powder and crack cocaine, norco, Vicodin, Percocet, Adderall, cannabis, LSD, and synthetic cannabinoids.

High school and college students are purchasing counterfeit prescription medication through social media. Drug traffickers can't control the amount of fentanyl they put into their counterfeit pills, we hear about some batches that are killing people by overdose, while pills from other batches with a lower quantity of fentanyl are not causing overdoses. The reason drug traffickers add fentanyl is that it does not take much, and the user gets a stronger high. People buying these drugs may not realize there is fentanyl in them and how dangerous it is.

This is a multibillion-dollar business that is killing people. According to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) there has been a significant increase in the number of drug overdose deaths in the last 7 years; a total as high as 519,000 overdose deaths. Just between November 2020 and November 2021 there have been over 100,000 drug overdose deaths.

The DEA has a marketing campaign right now called [One Pill Can Kill](#) to raise awareness about counterfeit pills and the understanding and belief that every drug that you come across on the street could most likely contain fentanyl.

According to the 2018 Oregon Student Wellness Survey in Hood River County students report 2.2% of 6th graders, 4.6% of 8th graders, and 24.2% of 11th graders stated that it would be "sort of" or "very easy" to get a drug like cocaine, LSD, or amphetamines. We also know that it is quite easy to purchase online. Throughout the Columbia River Gorge from the Metro area all the way to Pendleton there have been drug overdoses and a significant number of seizures.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "It's hard to spot counterfeit drugs, the only real way to know if a drug is counterfeit is through chemical analysis done in a laboratory. Sometimes, counterfeit drugs differ in size, shape, or color, or are sold in poor-quality packaging, but they often appear identical to the real thing." (Counterfeit Medicines)

"Counterfeit Medicines." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 7 July 2021, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/counterfeit-medicine>.

Information from [National Criminal Justice Training Center](#) of Fox Valley Technical College