

# What Is Fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a fast-acting synthetic opioid that is 30 to 50 times stronger than heroin.

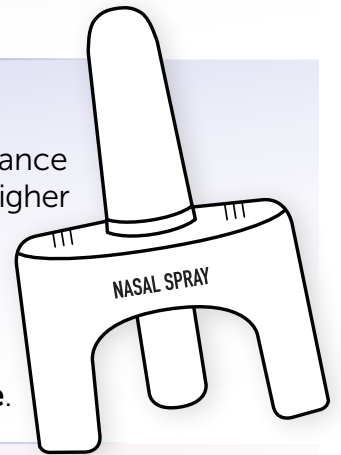
Carry naloxone. Naloxone can reverse an overdose from heroin and other opioids, including fentanyl.

Pharmaceutical fentanyl is prescribed for severe pain and end-of-life care. Nonpharmaceutical fentanyl is produced illegally and has been found in cocaine, heroin, ketamine and methamphetamine supplies in New York City. It has also been found in counterfeit benzodiazepines (such as Xanax and Klonopin) and opioid painkillers (such as OxyContin and Vicodin) bought on the street and online. Fentanyl cannot be identified by sight, taste or smell.

## Fentanyl Overdose

Fentanyl is stronger and faster-acting than other opioids. Using fentanyl or a substance that contains fentanyl increases the risk of overdose. The risk of overdose is even higher if fentanyl is present in a nonopioid drug (such as cocaine) and the person taking it does not usually use opioids.

Fentanyl overdoses require immediate medical attention. If you witness an overdose, call **911** and administer naloxone, a safe medication that can reverse an opioid overdose. To find naloxone near you, call **311** or visit [nyc.gov/naloxone](https://nyc.gov/naloxone).



## Signs of an opioid overdose include:

- Unresponsiveness or loss of consciousness
- Slow or stopped breathing
- Blue, gray or white lips or fingernails
- Snoring or gurgling sounds

## Overdoses that involve fentanyl might also have additional symptoms, including:

- Stiff, rigid or wooden-like jaw, chest or torso
- Slow or irregular heartbeat
- Seizure-like symptoms, such as jerking limbs and muscle spasms

If you suspect that someone is experiencing an opioid-involved overdose, it is important to act quickly and administer naloxone right away.

## Overdose Prevention Tips

- If you use drugs, use them with other people and take turns or have someone check on you.
- Test your drugs. Fentanyl test strips can tell you if your drugs contain fentanyl.
- Avoid mixing drugs. Using different drugs together, including alcohol, increases your risk of overdose.
- Go slow by taking small amounts.

For more information on fentanyl, including where to get fentanyl test strips, visit [nyc.gov/health/fentanyl](https://nyc.gov/health/fentanyl).

For free, confidential crisis counseling, mental health and substance use support, and referrals to care, call or text 988 or chat at [nyc.gov/988](https://nyc.gov/988). Counselors are available 24/7 by phone call in more than 200 languages.