

# FENTANYL IN LA COUNTY

In Los Angeles County, overdose deaths among teenagers doubled from 2019 to 2020 (during the covid pandemic), and in 2021, fentanyl was identified in about 77% of adolescent overdose deaths nationally. We are experiencing the worst overdose crisis in Los Angeles County history. Recent local tragedies include three Los Angeles County youth had overdosed from MDMA that had been contaminated with fentanyl in May 2022. On September 13, 2022, a 15-year-old Bernstein HS student was found dead on campus in Hollywood after ingesting a pill containing fentanyl. There have been at least other 7 reported overdoses of other Los Angeles County youth.

Fentanyl can now be found within counterfeit pills and other illicit drug within Los Angeles County and the presence of fentanyl is causing an increased rate of overdose and death. The landscape of overdose deaths no longer primarily among those who are using regularly. Due to fentanyl, we are seeing people overdose and die the first time they try an illicit substance or counterfeit pill.

## **What is fentanyl?**

Fentanyl is an opioid that is sold illicitly on its own but can also be mixed in with illicit substances. When taken by someone without tolerance to opioids, fentanyl that can rapidly cause someone to stop breathing and die. Fentanyl is 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine. The DEA has stated that they believe 100% of the counterfeit pills being sold online contain fentanyl.

## **What does it do?**

Fentanyl works on opioid receptors in the brain to decrease pain throughout the body, but it can also make people feel euphoric, confused, sedated, drowsy, dizzy, constipated, and nauseated, and can decrease your rate of breathing.

## **Why is it so dangerous?**

Fentanyl is more potent than other opioids, even in small quantities. A few grains of fentanyl can cause death from an overdose, and because it is colorless and odorless, it is difficult to detect without testing.

## **Why is it put in other pills or drugs?**

Fentanyl is very cheap to manufacture and when mixed with other substances (such as MDMA, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine) and put in counterfeit pills (illicit opioid pain pills such as oxycodone, morphine, norco, Vicodin), it can increase potency and euphoria.

## **How do we know if something has fentanyl?**

No one can tell if a pill or drug contains fentanyl by looking at it or smelling it. Fentanyl test strips purchased online can be used by they will not show how much fentanyl is in it or how potent it is. You can purchase them affordably online at: [BTNX](#), [Dose Test](#), [Dance Safe](#), [Wisebatch](#), or [TACO](#).

## **How can you prevent overdose deaths?**

**Narcan/naloxone** is a lifesaving medication that reverses an opioid overdose. It can be administered via a nasal spray or intramuscular injection that will restore normal breathing in someone who has overdosed on an opioid and stopped breathing. Los Angeles County Residents can ask their healthcare provider for a prescription for naloxone. Additionally, some pharmacies may provide naloxone, and a list of participating pharmacies is available online [here](#). Lastly, Los Angeles County residents can visit <http://www.LAodprevention.org> for a list of online resources. For more information about substance use prevention and treatment, visit [www.RecoverLA.org](http://www.RecoverLA.org).