



Saving Lives in Texas: The Facts on Fentanyl

Accidental fentanyl overdose deaths (also referred to as poisonings) are on the rise in Texas. However, you can keep yourself, your loved ones and your community safe from fentanyl by understanding the dangers of this powerful opioid and knowing how to reverse an overdose.



WHAT IS FENTANYL AND WHERE IS IT FOUND?

Fentanyl is a powerful opioid up to 50 times stronger than heroin. It is safe when taken as prescribed by a doctor to treat severe pain. However, illegally manufactured fentanyl is often added to counterfeit (fake) pills and other substances with or without a person's knowledge.

Counterfeit (fake) pills can be made to look like pills that come from a pharmacy, such as:

- Oxycodone
- Vicodin
- Percocet
- Xanax
- Adderall

Fentanyl can also be added to other illegal substances, such as:

- Heroin
- Cocaine
- Methamphetamine MDMA
(also known as "ecstasy" or "Molly")

Even small amounts of fentanyl, equivalent to a few grains of sand, can be deadly. That means that any pill could be the one that causes an overdose.





HOW TO STAY SAFE

Accidental fentanyl overdoses are life-threatening but preventable. Here are some ways to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

- **Talk about fentanyl.** Make sure your loved one understands the risks of fentanyl and how even one pill can result in an accidental overdose. If you're concerned about a loved one who uses substances, have a calm, direct conversation and listen without judgment. Work together to make a plan to stay safe.
- **Only take pills prescribed to you.** If it didn't come from your doctor or pharmacist, you can't be sure that it's safe.
- **Carry naloxone.** Naloxone is a medication that can reverse an opioid overdose, including fentanyl. Keeping it on hand could mean the difference between life and death — for you or someone else. Naloxone is available without a prescription at many Texas pharmacies. Naloxone has no effect on someone who doesn't have opioids in their system, so it's always best to use it if you think someone is overdosing.



SIGNS OF A FENTANYL OVERDOSE

You can save a life by learning how to recognize and respond effectively to the signs of someone overdosing from fentanyl or another opioid. Here are some things to look for:

- Small, constricted "pinpoint pupils."
- Face is extremely pale or feels clammy to the touch.
- Body goes limp.
- Fingernails or lips have a purple or blue color.
- Vomiting or making gurgling noises.
- Cannot be awakened or unable to speak.
- Breathing or heartbeat slows or stops.
- For people with lighter skin, the skin may turn blue or purple. For people with darker skin, the skin may turn gray or ashen.



HOW TO USE NALOXONE TO SAVE A LIFE

It may be difficult to tell if someone is experiencing an overdose. However, naloxone will not harm someone if opioids are not present in their system, so it's always best to use it if you're worried.

1. Call 911 right away.
2. Try to wake the person up.
3. Tilt the person's head back and give naloxone, if available.
4. Begin rescue breathing or CPR.
5. Turn the person on their side to prevent choking.
6. Stay with the person until emergency services arrive.



WHERE TO FIND HELP

Learn how to protect yourself and the people you care about from fentanyl at [OnePillKillsTx.com](https://www.onepillkillstx.com) and [TxOpioidResponse.org](https://www.txopioidresponse.org).

Knowing where to get naloxone or how to get the medical care that's necessary to treat opioid use disorder is critical. Find what's available near you at [TxOpioidResponse.org/resources](https://www.txopioidresponse.org/resources).

