



## Saving Lives in Texas: The Facts on Opioids

One in four Texans has experienced an opioid overdose (also referred to as a poisoning) or knows someone who has, according to surveys funded by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in 2020 and 2021. Every Texan needs to understand the dangers of misusing opioids and how to stay safe.



### WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are a class of drugs used to reduce pain and include prescription opioids, synthetic opioids like fentanyl, and heroin. Prescription opioids are one way to safely manage severe pain when taken as directed by a doctor. However, misusing prescription opioids can put you at risk of an overdose. Misusing your medications means taking more than you were prescribed, taking someone else's medication or taking for any non-medical use.

Combining opioids with alcohol and other drugs, like sleeping pills or cough medication, also increases the chance of an overdose and death. Xylazine, also known as "tranq" or "tranq dope", may be combined with opioids, including fentanyl, which significantly increases the risk of a fatal overdose. There is no approved drug for humans that can reverse the effects of xylazine, so prevention is critical.



### THE DANGERS OF FENTANYL

Fentanyl is a powerful opioid up to 50 times stronger than heroin — and it's taking the lives of Texans every day. Fentanyl is safe when taken as prescribed by a doctor to treat severe pain. However, illegally manufactured fentanyl is being added to counterfeit (fake) pills and other substances. Fentanyl is nearly impossible to detect on your own because you can't see, taste or smell it. Even one pill can cause a fatal overdose.



Fentanyl may be added to 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")



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## HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND TO AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

Learning how to recognize the signs of an overdose and respond effectively can save a life. 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.



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## HOW TO SAVE A LIFE

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.



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## TALKING ABOUT OPIOIDS

If you are concerned that a friend or family member may be misusing opioids, it's time to speak up. It may be challenging, but talking about opioid misuse and addiction can save someone's life. For tips to help start the conversation with someone you care about — whether it's your partner, parent or friend — visit [TxOpioidResponse.org/how-to-help-someone](https://www.txopioidresponse.org/how-to-help-someone)



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## WHERE TO FIND HELP

Knowing where to find 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)

