



Fentanyl Awareness & Response

For First Responders

What you'll learn

- What fentanyl is.
- Effective safety and response strategies.
- Overdose response protocols.
- Common concerns about fentanyl and naloxone.
- Resources about opioids and naloxone.





Introduction to Fentanyl

Fentanyl is different from other drugs.

Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid drug. When prescribed by a doctor, it's used for pain relief in controlled doses.

It's massively strong.

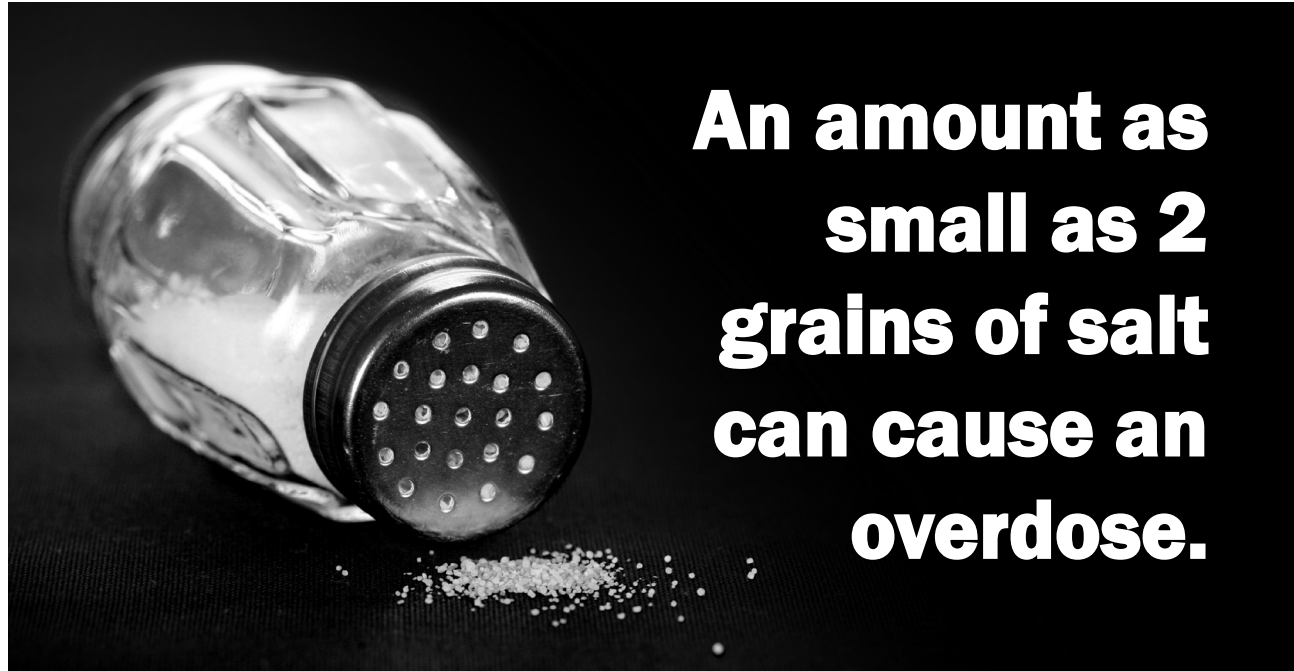
**Fentanyl
is up to**

50x

stronger than heroin

100x

stronger than morphine



**An amount as
small as 2
grains of salt
can cause an
overdose.**



Fentanyl doesn't mix well.

A pill or line may have no fentanyl but another from the same batch may have a dangerous amount. Fentanyl can be clumpy.

When people make or sell drugs and mix in fentanyl, it doesn't spread evenly throughout the batch.

Fentanyl doesn't always look the same.

You can't taste it. You can't smell it.

Fentanyl is often found in powder, pill, or liquid form.

It can be mixed into other drugs like pills, meth, cocaine or molly. People who make or sell drugs often mix it in to make the drug stronger at less cost to them.



Safety Precautions for First Responders





Your safety comes first.

Wear proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to help prevent accidental exposure.

Use nitrile gloves, an N95 mask, and safety glasses when handling unknown substances.

Refer to your agency's guidelines for when and how to use PPE effectively.

If you suspect a substance may contain fentanyl



Avoid actions that may cause powder to become airborne.

Assume nearby surfaces are contaminated, so your hands are.

Treat it like cayenne pepper. Don't rub your eyes or scratch your skin.

If you think you've been exposed to fentanyl

Don't panic. Absorption through intact skin is unlikely.

Wash your hands or any affected area with cool water and soap if available. Don't use hand sanitizers as they can enhance absorption.

If you think you inhaled powder, move to fresh air and monitor for symptoms.

If you suspect your clothing is contaminated, follow your department's guidelines.



A close-up photograph of a person lying down, their face partially visible in the lower-left corner. A hand wearing a blue nitrile glove is placed on the person's forehead. The person is wearing a dark blue sweater. The background is a dark, textured surface. The text 'Overdose Response Protocols' is overlaid in white, bold font on the right side of the image, with a short orange horizontal line underneath it.

Overdose Response Protocols



Signs of an opioid overdose

If someone is unresponsive, their skin is blue or grey and cold, and they're not breathing normally.

If ANYONE shows symptoms of slow breathing, unresponsiveness and constricted or pinpoint pupils, administer naloxone, also called Narcan.

How naloxone works

It binds with opioids and blocks the effects on your system.

If there are no opioids present, it does nothing. You can't overdose on naloxone, and people often need multiple doses.



Administering naloxone

Administer naloxone as soon as possible. It's safe to use even if they aren't overdosing.

Peel off the wrapper, tilt their head back, place it in their nose and press to spray.

If they are still unresponsive after two to three minutes, use another dose in the other nostril.

Use multiple doses if you need to until paramedics arrive.

Monitor the patient after administering naloxone.



Common Concerns About Fentanyl & Naloxone



Myth #1 Skin exposure to fentanyl can cause an overdose.

Skin exposure to fentanyl poses little risk.

It's still a good idea to:

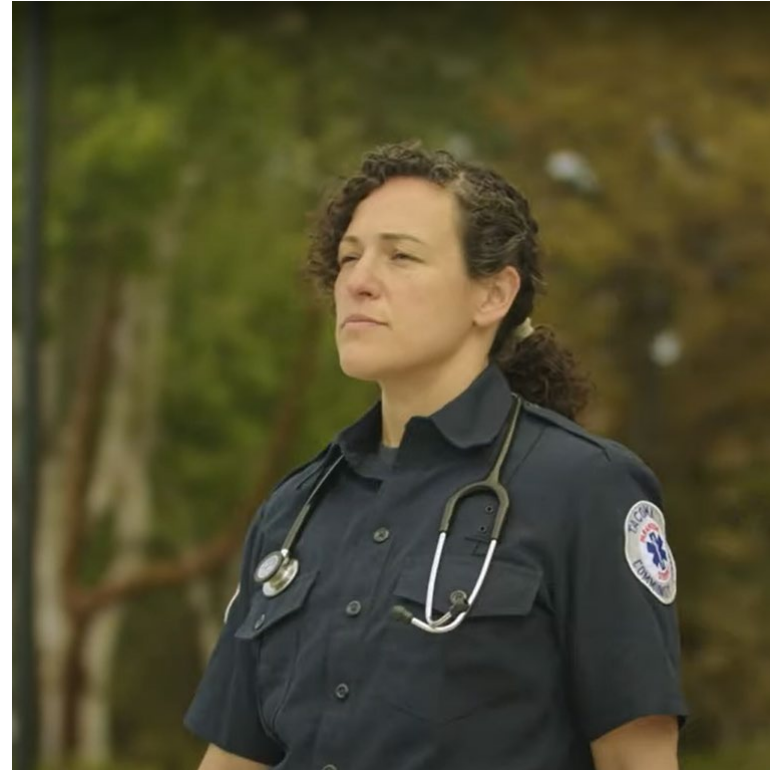
- ✓ Wear gloves.
- ✓ Wash your hands.
- ✓ Avoid scratching yourself.



Myth #2 Inhaling fentanyl powder can cause an overdose.

If you inhale fentanyl powder, you will have time to act:

- ✓ Move to fresh air.
- ✓ Monitor your symptoms.
- ✓ Call for help.



Myth #3 Naloxone can cause an overdose.

Naloxone is safe, so use it if you need it.

It binds with opioids and blocks the effects on your system.

If there are no opioids present, it does nothing.

You can't overdose on naloxone, and people often need multiple doses.





Key Takeaways

Be informed. Be prepared. Be safe.



Fentanyl is a strong opioid, different from other drugs.

Your safety comes first. Wear PPE. Don't panic.

Skin exposure to fentanyl poses little risk of overdose.

Respond to an overdose quickly. Use naloxone.

Naloxone is safe, even if no opioids are present.

It's safe to treat an overdose.

Resources

Find naloxone near you



You can get naloxone at most pharmacies without a prescription.

Most insurance covers the cost, or you may be able to get it free from a community organization.

Overdose education & naloxone distribution



Get helpful resources from Washington State Department of Health.