



# The Fentanyl Fury

**Substance Misuse Prevention Newsletter: A Collection of Readings**

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## Consequences of Fentanyl Use

### Physical

Physical effects of Fentanyl include issues with breathing, unconsciousness, nausea, constipation and even death (National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIH], 2021). Those who become addicted to Fentanyl can have withdrawal symptoms, which may include diarrhea, vomiting, sleep issues, muscle pain, sweating, rapid heartbeat, high blood pressure, abdominal cramping, along with others (Case-Lo, 2019; NIH, 2021). Withdrawal from opioids can be severe and often warrants medical supervision and treatment.

### Mental

Repeated opioid misuse desensitizes the brain's opioid receptors, which is instrumental in the regulation of emotions and pain (NIH, 2021). Specifically, these receptors can dictate feelings of pleasure, happiness, reward seeking behaviors, pain, and attention (Medline Plus, 2020). Over time, the individual is unable to gain pleasure from anything other than the drug, resulting in increased misuse due to the drug's ability to cause a sense of euphoria (NIH, 2021). Additionally, opioid misuse will result in sedation, confusion, and drowsiness (NIH, 2021).

### Fentanyl Street Names

Apache, Jackpot, Dance Fever, Murder  
8, Friend, Tango & Cash, Goodfellas

CDC (2021)

University Health and Counseling Services

### A Brief Overview

According to Miller (2022), over 600 Maine residents died due to overdoses in 2021. This is a 23% increase from the previous year, which seems to be correlated with the spike in the misuse of Fentanyl (Miller, 2022). Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid that can be lethal and is often hidden in other substances (Billings 2021; Miller, 2022). This drug can come in both liquid or powder forms and is often combined with other drugs (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2021). Recently, in Connecticut, Fentanyl laced marijuana resulted in multiple overdoses (Boyle, 2021). Naloxone (i.e., Narcan) must be used to reverse the effects of Fentanyl (Miller, 2022). However, if the person is using alone, or does not have Narcan available, the effects can often prove to be deadly. Fentanyl can be hidden in many different types of drugs, and last year even counterfeit pain pills containing Fentanyl were distributed throughout Maine (City of Portland, 2021).

### Articles

[Maine Saw a Record Number of Overdose Deaths in 2021](#)

[Maine Shattered its Annual Record for Overdose Deaths in 2021](#)

### Fentanyl Facts

[Connecticut Department of Public Health](#)

**Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to**

**50x**

**stronger than  
heroin**

**100x**

**stronger than  
morphine**

CDC (2021)

**“42% of pills tested for fentanyl contained at least 2 mg of fentanyl, considered a potentially lethal dose”**

**“Overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids (primarily illicitly manufactured fentanyl) rose 55.6 percent and appear to be the primary driver of the increase in total drug overdose deaths.”**

United States Drug Enforcement  
Administration (n.d.)

#### Articles

[Facts about Fentanyl](#)

[DEA](#)

[NIH Facts about Fentanyl](#)

#### Signs & Symptoms of an Overdose

- Constricted pupils
- Falling asleep
- Loss of Consciousness
- Slow breathing
- Choking Sounds
- Gurgling Sounds
- Limp Body
- Cold and Clammy Skin
- Discolored Skin (specifically nails and lips)

CDC (2021)

#### Ways to Reduce your Risk & Recognize Risk

**Seek Support** - Reaching out for support is the first step and often the most difficult one in stopping misuse or preventing an opioid use disorder. If you or a loved one is struggling with opioid misuse, reach out to your health care provider or contact Health and Counseling at USM to assist you. Together we can decipher which resources are right for you and ensure you are safe and able to work towards achieving a sense of overall wellbeing.

**Educate Yourself** - Reading newsletters such as this, and attending other educational sessions, such as Narcan trainings, can give you the information you need to keep yourself and those around you safe. Even if you are not struggling with the negative effects of Fentanyl, you may be unexpectedly exposed to a situation where you recognize the warning signs of a potential overdose or addiction. Understanding what to do in these situations may save a life.

**Be Aware of Your Surroundings** - Avoid surrounding yourself with individuals who may be misusing substances as this will reduce your risk of peer pressure or feeling tempted to join in. Additionally, it is important to remember that **Fentanyl can be hidden in many different types of substances and that even a very small amount of Fentanyl can be deadly. If someone chooses to use a substance, such as marijuana, they should always know exactly, where it comes from and what is in it to ensure that there is no risk of it being laced with another substance. Additionally, liquid forms of Fentanyl can be absorbed through the skin and prove to be very dangerous (NIH, 2018).** Ultimately, no substance in any amount is safe to use.

#### Articles

[CDC - Understanding Addiction to Support Recovery](#)

[CDC - Real Stories of How People Overcame Addiction](#)

#### How to Respond to a Potential Overdose

- 1 – Call 911
- 2 – Administer Naloxone
- 3 – Attempt to keep the person breathing and awake
- 4 – Lay the individual on their side to prevent choking
- 5 – Stay with the individual until medical professionals arrive - CDC (2021)

*Note: Attending a Naloxone training can be a way to prepare yourself if you are ever unexpectedly faced with having to help someone in an overdose situation. The [ROCC at USM](#) occasionally sponsors Naloxone Trainings.*

**For comments on this newsletter or suggestions for future articles please contact: Diane Geyer, LCPC, LADC, CCS, NCC~ Clinician and Coordinator of Clinical Substance Use Services at USM or Jillian Littlefield, RN and Graduate Assistant ~ Email: [diane.geyer@maine.edu](mailto:diane.geyer@maine.edu), [jillian.littlefield@maine.edu](mailto:jillian.littlefield@maine.edu)**