



FENTANYL RISK & PREVENTION STRATEGIES



ILICIT FENTANYL 101:

What is it?

A potent synthetic opioid that is 50 times stronger than heroin and **100 times stronger than morphine.**

How are people exposed?

Fentanyl may be intentionally or unintentionally mixed with various substances, including counterfeit pills, heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine. Users may be unaware that what they have purchased is contaminated, contributing to **accidental overdose risks.**

What is the impact of fentanyl?

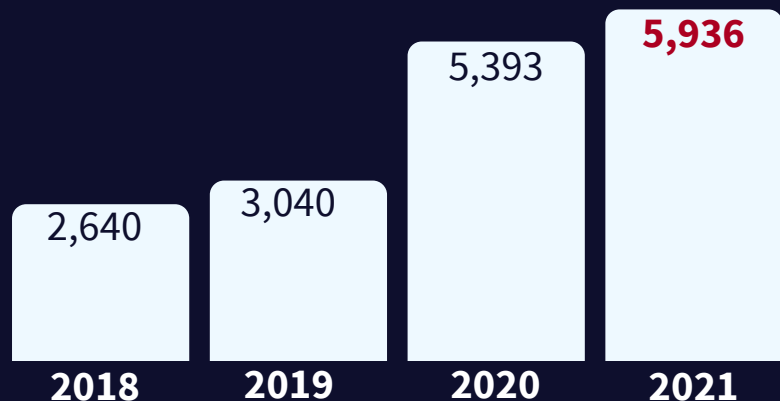
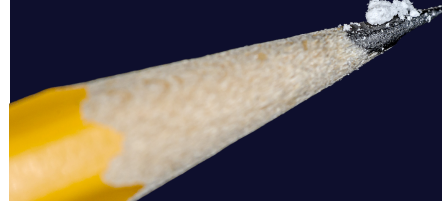
Fentanyl is a **leading cause of death** of Americans under 50, killing more people than heart disease, cancer, homicide, suicide, and other accidents combined.

84%

of overdose deaths among youth aged 10-19 involved synthetic opioids, primarily illicit fentanyl. Sixty-five percent of youth who overdosed had no documented opioid use history. (Jul 2019-Dec 2021)

2 mg

of fentanyl, the amount on the tip of this pencil, can be deadly. (DEA)



AMONG YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS 15-24, OVERDOSE DEATHS RELATED TO SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS ARE INCREASING*

*Primarily illicit fentanyl



EMERGING THREAT

In April 2023, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy declared fentanyl adulterated or associated with Xylazine as an emerging threat to the United States. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has seized mixtures of xylazine and fentanyl in 48 out of 50 states.

ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE USE:

Impact on youth

Adolescence poses a high risk for drug initiation, with usage rapidly increasing among ages 12-19. **Substance use before 18 is a risk factor for substance use disorder by age 20.**

First Line of Defense

To protect young individuals from the risks of substance use, **our first line of defense is prevention.**

Evidence-Based Environmental Prevention Strategies

Effective prevention involves proactive, multilevel strategies. These are implemented across the range of environments influencing youth to **reduce risk factors and promote protective factors** associated with youth substance use initiation and escalation.

Community coalitions are effective at bringing together various stakeholders to collaborate on implementing these **Environmental Strategies**, such as those recognized by **Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development**, a registry of evidence-based interventions. These have been scientifically proven to prevent substance use and promote healthier outcomes for youth.



SCHOOL FOCUS ON PREVENTION

Schools are the primary environment outside of families with which youth interact, making them an ideal setting for prevention. Focusing on **positive youth development** and addressing the underlying causes of youth substance use are associated with a wide range of positive outcomes that support schools in achieving their mission.

- Education Attainment
- Academic Skills
- Coping Strategies
- Decision-making Skills

- Risk for Mental Health Issues
- Behavioral Issues
- Social Isolation
- School Dropout Rates

PREVENTION STEPS SCHOOLS CAN TAKE

- Provide Mental Health Education and Teach Healthy Coping Skills
- Promote a Positive School Environment and Create Opportunities for Positive Peer Influence
- Engage with Youth, Families and the Community
- Utilize Available Media Campaigns
- Offer Extracurricular Activities
- Support Mental Health Services
- Conduct Regular Check-ins and Surveys
- **Search for a DFC coalition in your area to join or seek funding to create one!**

Scan to learn more about funding for Drug-free community (DFC) coalitions and access prevention resources.



SAFETY ORIENTED STRATEGIES

Naloxone, a life-saving medication, can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It is crucial to have this medication on hand in the event that youth may initiate substance use with a high risk for fentanyl contamination. It can be administered by anyone, is easy to use, and is portable.



60%

of overdose deaths among youth aged 10-19 occurred in the home.

67%

of overdose deaths had potential bystanders present who may have been able to save a life by administering naloxone.

(Jul 2019-Dec 2021)

Schools & Families: Be Prepared, Save a Life

- Develop an emergency operation plan for opioid overdose situations (see the resources for a link to a model plan).
- Familiarize yourself with the signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose.
- Attend naloxone training sessions to learn proper administration techniques.
- Ensure convenient access to naloxone in case of emergencies.
- Talk to your pharmacist about getting naloxone.
- Review **The Real Deal on Fentanyl media campaign at realdealonfentanyl.com.**