



ILCAAAP

Illinois Church Action on Alcohol & Addiction Problems

Fentanyl Alert - February 14, 2023



Dangers of Fentanyl Pill Video

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1bs3Wm6DIY>

What is Fentanyl?

Fentanyl is nearly always described with the following three words: Powerful. Synthetic. Opioid. Let's look at these terms in reverse order.

Opioid: Fentanyl belongs to the class of drugs called opioids, which are used to reduce pain. This category also includes morphine, oxycodone, and heroin. Of these, fentanyl is one of the most potent and is approved for medical use as a surgical anesthetic or for people with chronic pain (typically terminal cancer patients). Opioids reduce physical and emotional/psychological pain and can have a euphoric effect in high doses, which is why people sometimes misuse opioids.

Synthetic: Unlike morphine and heroin, fentanyl is not derived from the opium poppy. Rather, it is a synthetic product, meaning it is "formed through a chemical process by the human agency"; i.e. it is not derived from plants. This means that it can be produced quickly – it is not dependent on agricultural and harvest conditions. Since the supply is only limited by the availability of the precursor chemicals and the availability of people to make it, fentanyl is exceptionally cheap and easy to make compared to plant-based opioids.

Powerful: Fentanyl is good at its job. It is a highly effective and efficient pain reliever. It is 50-100 times stronger than morphine. All the properties are amplified, so it takes a lot less

fentanyl to get the same effect as morphine or heroin. That has many of implications, for instance:

- Just a tiny amount can be lethal, especially if you don't have a tolerance to opioids.
- Fentanyl takes effect faster and wears off sooner, making it highly addictive and harder to kick.
- Standardized dosing in a pressed tablet requires precise measures of minute quantities, something that is not guaranteed by illegal suppliers. The difference between high and die is often a few milligrams or roughly a few grains of salt.
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