

Counterfeit Opioid Pills, Increased 430%

Counterfeit opioid pills made to look like prescription oxycodone or similar pills but containing illicit fentanyl, the numbers are enormous.

- **2023:** The DEA seized **more than 79–80 million counterfeit pills containing fentanyl** in the United States. ([DEA](#))
- DEA laboratory testing in 2023 found that **about 7 out of 10** fentanyl-containing counterfeit pills tested contained a potentially lethal dose. ([DEA](#))
- **2024:** Federal records report approximately **60 million counterfeit pills containing fentanyl were seized**. ([Congress.gov](#))
- **2025:** DEA reported **more than 47 million counterfeit pills seized**. ([Get Smart About Drugs](#))

Importantly, these are **seizures, not the total number produced or distributed**. There isn't a reliable national figure for how many fentanyl-laced pills actually reached consumers, because law enforcement only sees a fraction of the illicit supply.

Also, "laced opioid pills" can be misleading: many of these are **not legitimate opioid pills that were contaminated**. They are **counterfeit pills manufactured to resemble legitimate prescription drugs**, particularly oxycodone/M30 tablets, and fentanyl is incorporated during illicit manufacture. The CDC specifically identifies counterfeit pills resembling oxycodone as a major form of illegally manufactured fentanyl. ([cdc.gov](#))

A CDC study of **one** hospital in the western U.S. identified **352 suspected counterfeit M30 exposures during 2017–2022**.

CDC also reports that the proportion of overdose deaths with evidence of counterfeit-pill involvement increased from **2.0% in July–September 2019 to 4.7% in October–December 2021** across the studied jurisdictions.

Counterfeit pills are specifically manufactured to resemble legitimate prescription medications, including oxycodone/M30, hydrocodone, and alprazolam (Xanax). The CDC says illegally made fentanyl is increasingly pressed into these counterfeit pills, and people are unaware that fentanyl is present.

counterfeit pills containing fentanyl seized in the United States, there is an important data limitation: DEA does not publish a single consistent national annual count for every year beginning in 2019.

The documented figures are:

Year	Pills seized
2019	DEA reported about 2.6 million counterfeit pills seized overall; the fentanyl-specific number is not clearly published as an annual national total.
2020	No comparable national fentanyl-counterfeit-pill total located

Year	Pills seized
2021	20+ million counterfeit pills seized; DEA reported that many contained fentanyl.
2022	50.6 million fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills
2023	77+ million fentanyl pills
2024	61.1 million fake pills; congressional records describe approximately 60 million as fentanyl-containing counterfeit pills.
2025	47+ million fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills
Total	

For **2021–2025 alone**, adding the reported figures gives approximately:

$20 + 50.6 + 77 + 61.1 + 47 = 255.7$ million pills

So **at least about 256 million counterfeit/fentanyl pills were seized during 2021–2025**, depending on the precise classification used for the 2021 figure.

The actual **2019–2025 total is higher**, but I would not give you a fabricated number for 2019–2020 because the national DEA reporting isn't directly comparable across those years. DEA did report that fentanyl-containing counterfeit-pill seizures increased approximately **430% from 2019 to 2021**, demonstrating the enormous increase over that period.

Also, **seized pills are only the pills law enforcement intercepted**. They do not represent the total number manufactured, trafficked, sold, or consumed.

Other concerns include pesticides, Kratom, and vapes.