

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid – a drug with effects similar to morphine, but 50-100 times as potent.



The use of illicit fentanyl, and similar synthetic opioids, has become a major public health crisis – and a serious workplace hazard for health workers, correctional staff, community outreach workers, and others.



Remember that you have the right to know about workplace hazards, and the right to refuse dangerous work. Your employer is required to provide appropriate protective equipment and training for dealing with hazardous substances.

HOW CAN YOU BE EXPOSED TO FENTANYL?

Opiates such as fentanyl can appear in many forms, including:









BLOTTER PAPER



TABLETS AND CAPSULES

DISSOLVED IN LIQUID

Unintended exposure to fentanyl may come through inhaling or ingesting the substance, or absorbing it through mucous membranes (the eyes, nose, or mouth). Fentanyl can also be absorbed through the skin, but short-term skin contact is not as dangerous as other methods of exposure.

Small, difficult-to-detect amount of fentanyl can be dangerous. A 2mg dose of fentanyl can be fatal for an adult - and a similar drug, carfentanil, can be 100 times as potent as fentanyl. Always err on the side of caution – if you suspect fentanyl may be present, put on your personal protective equipment.

WHAT ARE THE PHYSICAL SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE TO FENTANYL?

Pinpoint pupils. ••

Difficult, slow, or shallow breathing. Breathing may sound like snoring or gurgling or may also cease altogether.

Bluish skin on lips, fingernails.



Dizziness, or disorientation, nausea.

Sleepiness, drowsiness, loss of consciousness, unresponsiveness to pain or voices.

Abnormally slow heart rate.

Cold, clammy skin.

IF YOU SUSPECT FENTANYL IS PRESENT, DO:

- ✓ Immediately and thoroughly wash any exposed skin with soap and running water.
- Ensure you utilize adequate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- ✓ Follow employer policy; also call 911.
- Take precautions to prevent further contamination or exposure.
- Report the incident to the employer.

YOU SUSPECT FENTANYL IS PRESENT, DO NOT:

- Use hand sanitizer, bleach, or alcohol wipes. These may increase the absorption of the drug through your skin.
- ĭ Touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- ☑ Disturb suspicious substances; they may become aerosolized and inhaled. Keep containers sealed, and dampen or cover suspicious substances.
- Attempt to smell or taste or touch a substance which could be fentanyl.

PPE FOR HANDLING SUSPECTED FENTANYL:

For situations where a small amount of fentanyl is present, the Centres for Disease Control recommend the following minimum personal protective equipment:









DISPOSABLE FILTERING FACEPIECE RESPIRATOR (RATED N100, R100, OR P100)



