



OverdoseLifeline

How Accurate are Fentanyl Test Strips (FTS)?

- FTS are highly accurate when used properly. Most FTS on the market are 96-100 percent accurate in detecting the presence of fentanyl (1).
- It is important to note that a negative test result may still contain a fentanyl analog or fentanyl at a lower concentration than detectable by the test strip (1).
- FTS do not measure how much fentanyl is contained in a drug sample nor does it measure the potency of the supply (1,2).

How do I respond to a Fentanyl Overdose?

- You should respond to a fentanyl overdose the same way you respond to any other overdose by administering naloxone, calling 911, and starting rescue breaths (3).

What is the Difference Between Medical Fentanyl and Illicit Fentanyl?

- Medical fentanyl is made in a laboratory with regulations and is packaged with accurate dosage labeling. Illicit fentanyl is not regulated and does not have proper labeling to let people know how much they are getting (3).

Myths and Misinformation Surrounding Fentanyl

Myth #1: Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues are “resistant to naloxone”

Response: They are opioids and will respond to naloxone if someone is overdosing.

- Naloxone is FDA-approved and works to reverse an opioid overdose, including fentanyl overdose, by restoring breath to unconscious overdose victims (4).

Myth #2: You can overdose just by touching fentanyl

Response: You cannot overdose simply by touching powdered fentanyl.

Response: A common myth, but fentanyl must be introduced into the bloodstream or a mucus membrane for someone to feel the effects.

- The risk of emergency responders being exposed to a dangerous amount of fentanyl is extremely low. Nitrile gloves and an N95 respirator provide



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sufficient dermal protection and protection from fentanyl particles that may be suspended in the air (5).

The harm of misinformation

- Fentanyl myths lead to harmful policies that hurt, instead of help. They create fear and panic among law enforcement and can create devastating consequences for people who are overdosing and need medical attention. (4,6).

Sources:

1. Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association. (2021). *Fentanyl Test Strips* (pp.1- 5). <https://www.nmhealth.org/publication/view/general/6756/>
2. Connecticut Department of Public Health. (n.d.). Fentanyl testing to prevent overdose information for healthcare providers and people who use drugs. https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/AIDS--Chronic-Diseases/Prevention/DPH_FentanylTestStrips.pdf
3. *Fentanyl – MO-HOPE Project*. (n.d). <https://mohopeproject.org/category/faq/fentanyl/>
4. *Facts, Not Fear. The Truth About Fentanyl*. (2021, August 9). Drug Policy Alliance. <https://drugpolicy.org/blog/facts-not-fear-truth-about-fentanyl>
5. Moss, M. J., Warrick, B. J., Nelson, L. S., McKay, C. A., Dubé, P.-A., Gosselin, S., Palmer, R. B., & Stolbach, A. I. (2017). ACMT and AACT Position Statement: Preventing Occupational Fentanyl and Fentanyl Analog Exposure to Emergency Responders. *Journal of Medical Toxicology*, 13(4), 347–351. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13181-017-0628-2>
6. Macbride, K. (2021, June 16). Five dangerous fentanyl myths debunked by science. Inverse. <https://www.inverse.com/mind-body/fentanyl-study-debunk-myths>

Additional Fentanyl Resources

[Fentanyl Test Strip Pilot](#)

[Myths and Misinformation about Law Enforcement and Fentanyl Exposure](#)

[Fentanyl Drug Chemical Information](#)

[Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders](#)



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