

FENTANYL & FENTANYL ANALOGS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



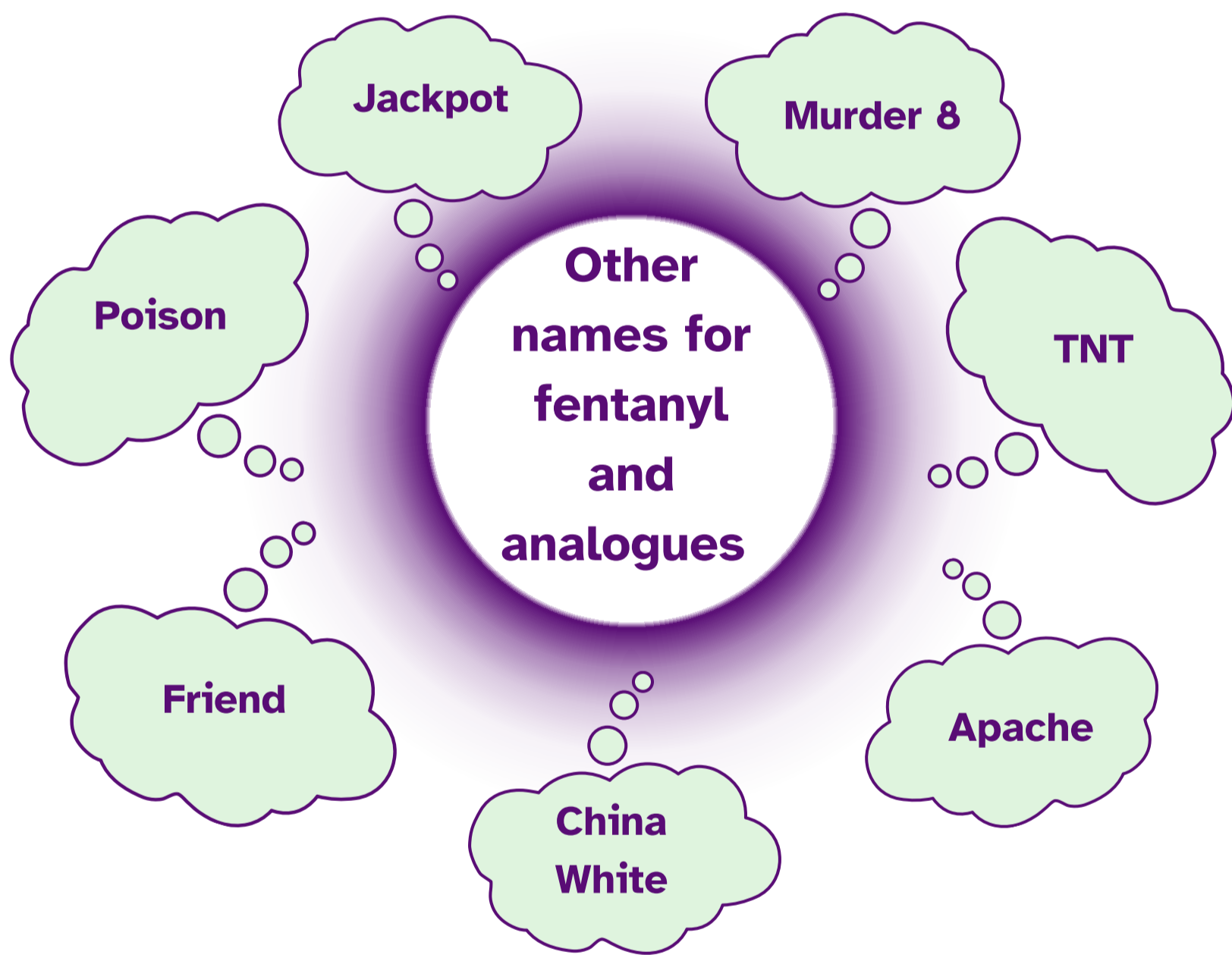
What are they?

Fentanyl and fentanyl analogs are depressants.

Fentanyl and analogs are highly potent synthetic opioids. Synthetic opioids can be produced chemically without natural ingredients (i.e., opium poppy). They have similar effects to natural opioids (e.g., morphine, heroin) but are much stronger than natural opioids. Fentanyl is 50-100 times stronger than morphine.

Fentanyl is used medically to treat patients with severe pain, such as after surgery. It is sometimes used non-medically for relaxation and euphoria.

Fentanyl analogs (e.g., carfentanyl) are chemically similar to fentanyl and can be even more potent. Some fentanyl analogs can be up to 10,000 times stronger than fentanyl. Most fentanyl analogs are sold in the illegal market.



How are they used?

Illegal fentanyl is usually sold as a powder. It may be taken orally, snorted, smoked, or injected.



In medical use, fentanyl is administered as an injection, patch, or lozenge.



Fentanyl is often added to other drugs like heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, or MDMA to enhance their effects. It may also be added to counterfeit pills that are made to look like prescription opioids.

As a result, **people may consume fentanyl without knowing.**



What are the effects?

Fentanyl and fentanyl analogs carry a high risk of overdose and death.



Fentanyl and analogs carry an extremely high risk of overdose and death, especially for someone whose body is not used to opioids.



The effect of fentanyl depends on your tolerance and the dose. A dose prescribed to one person could be fatal to another person.



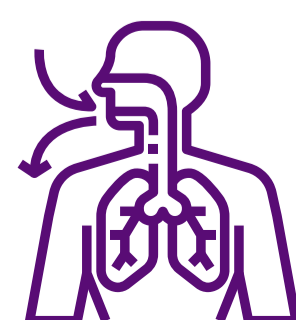
Fentanyl is highly addictive. Regular use needs increasing amounts for the same effect. It may cause withdrawal symptoms if stopped suddenly.



Fentanyl can cause drowsiness, dizziness and confusion. It can also cause nausea and digestive problems.



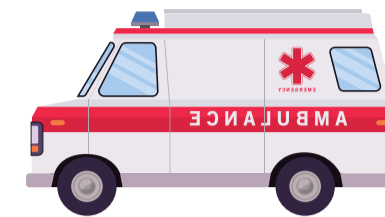
Given its potency, a tiny amount of fentanyl is often enough to cause overdose. Even for a regular fentanyl user, the difference between a regular dose and a fatal dose is very small.



Fentanyl slows down body processes, such as breathing and heart rate. These changes can lead to an overdose or death.

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When do you seek emergency help?



Fentanyl overdose or poisoning: Fentanyl and fentanyl analogs can slow or stop your breathing, causing unconsciousness and death. The risk is especially high with these drugs because they are very strong (potent). There is an even greater risk of overdose if your body is not used to taking opioids.

Signs: The person may become very sleepy and then become unconscious and cannot be woken up. They may have slow breathing, a weak pulse, and their skin may become clammy, pale or blue, particularly at their lips and fingernails.

This is an emergency! Call 911 right away and give naloxone if it is available.

Did you know?

Fentanyl is very hard to detect, as it is odorless and tasteless. People who sell unregulated drugs may not even know that there is fentanyl in their products.

People may ingest fentanyl unintentionally when taking another substance that is laced with fentanyl, causing overdose.



How to stay safer?



Not using fentanyl is the best way to stay safer and avoid harms.

If you still decide to use fentanyl, consider these harm reduction strategies:

- 1 **Only use fentanyl if you use opioids regularly.** It is a very potent opioid that will stop breathing if your body is not used to the opioid.
- 2 **Don't use substances alone.** Have someone with you in case you need help or naloxone. Don't use in isolated areas where medical help is unavailable. Consider consuming substances in a supervised consumption site.
- 3 Check substances for fentanyl using a **testing strip** before use.
- 4 **Choose regulated sources.** If you use substances, choose regulated sources when purchasing products to avoid it being laced with fentanyl.
- 5 Keep a **naloxone kit** on hand if you or someone else may be using substances.
- 6 **Call 911** immediately if someone is showing symptoms of an overdose.

Drug testing kits

Testing strips can be used to detect fentanyl in other substances.

SWAP provides free fentanyl test strips across Newfoundland and Labrador. They also supply free naloxone kits and training.

To find out more, call or text **709-757-7927**.

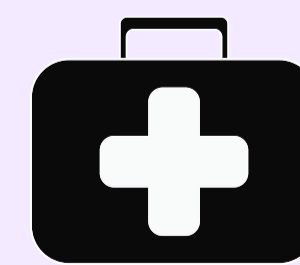


Naloxone can save a life!

Naloxone is used to **temporarily reverse the effects of opioids**. Giving naloxone when someone doesn't need it won't harm them.

3 or 4 doses may be needed for the more potent fentanyl analogs.

Check out our naloxone instructions: decyde.ca/educational-materials/#substance-use



Call 811 to find where you can receive a kit

For more information visit us at: www.DECYDE.ca

These documents are intended to support educators in their delivery of drug education. They are not for direct student use unless deemed developmentally appropriate.

References:

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