

**ONE
PILL CAN
KILL**

Department of Justice | Drug Enforcement Administration
FAKE PILLS FACT SHEET

FAKE PRESCRIPTION PILLS • WIDELY AVAILABLE • INCREASINGLY LETHAL

DEA LAB TESTING REVEALS THAT
6 OUT OF EVERY 10 PILLS
WITH FENTANYL CONTAIN A POTENTIALLY
LETHAL DOSE



Fake pills often contain fentanyl and are more lethal than ever before.

DEA officials report a dramatic rise in the number of fake pills containing at least 2 mg of fentanyl, which is considered a potentially lethal dose.

Drug traffickers are using fake pills to exploit the opioid crisis and prescription drug misuse. In 2021, 107,622 people died by drug poisoning in the United States.

Fentanyl, the synthetic opioid most commonly found in fake pills, is the primary driver in this alarming increase in poisoning deaths.

Criminal drug networks are flooding the U.S. with deadly fake pills.

- Criminal drug networks are mass-producing fake pills and falsely marketing them as legitimate prescription pills to deceive the American public.
- Fake pills are easy to purchase, widely available, often contain fentanyl or methamphetamine, and can be deadly.
- Fake prescription pills are easily accessible and often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms, making them available to anyone with a smartphone.
- Many fake pills are made to look like prescription opioids such as oxycodone (Oxycontin®, Percocet®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), and alprazolam (Xanax®); or stimulants like amphetamines (Adderall®).



AUTHENTIC
oxycodone
M30 tablets

***FAKE**
oxycodone M30 tablets
containing fentanyl

For more information about fake pills, go to [DEA.gov/OnePill](https://www.dea.gov/OnePill)

Data as of December 2022

*Photos of fake pills do not represent all available fake pills.

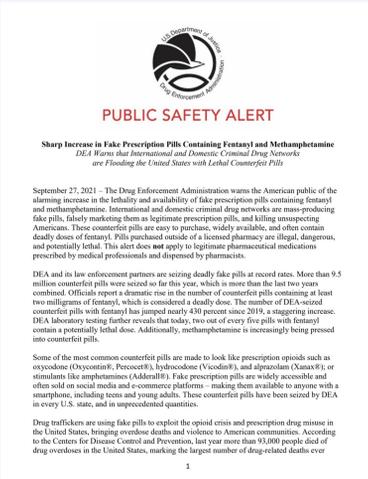


DEA'S RESPONSE

DEA's mission is to protect the safety and health of American communities from the harm, violence, and overdoses driven by criminal drug networks.

Public Safety Alert

DEA issued a Public Safety Alert warning the public of the dramatic increase in deadly, fake pills.



Phase 1 / Public Safety Surge Aug. 3 - Sept. 27, 2021

A public safety surge to address the alarming increase in the availability of fentanyl-laced fake pills.

Phase 1 Seizures	1.8 Million Fake Pills	1570 lbs Fentanyl
8840 lbs Meth	810 Arrests	158 Weapons

Phase 2 / Public Safety Surge Sept. 28 - Dec. 14, 2021

A second public safety surge targeting deadly, fake pills – and their increasing availability on social media platforms.

Phase 2 Seizures	8 Million Fake Pills	1500 lbs Fentanyl
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The Message to Americans

- 1 Never take medicine that wasn't prescribed to you by your doctor and dispensed by a licensed pharmacist.
- 2 Talk to your family and friends about the dangers of drugs online.
- 3 Spread the word that One Pill Can Kill.

The seizures were directly linked to:

46 overdoses & 39 overdose deaths.	At least 76 of the cases involved drug traffickers using social media applications	32 cases had direct ties to the major Mexican drug networks
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FENTANYL IS LETHAL

FENTANYL KILLS
1 PERSON
EVERY
9 MINUTES

It isn't a high. It isn't a game. Don't be a statistic.

#1 leading cause of death in 18 to 45 year-olds

2 mg is a lethal dose of fentanyl

60% of pills contain a lethal dose

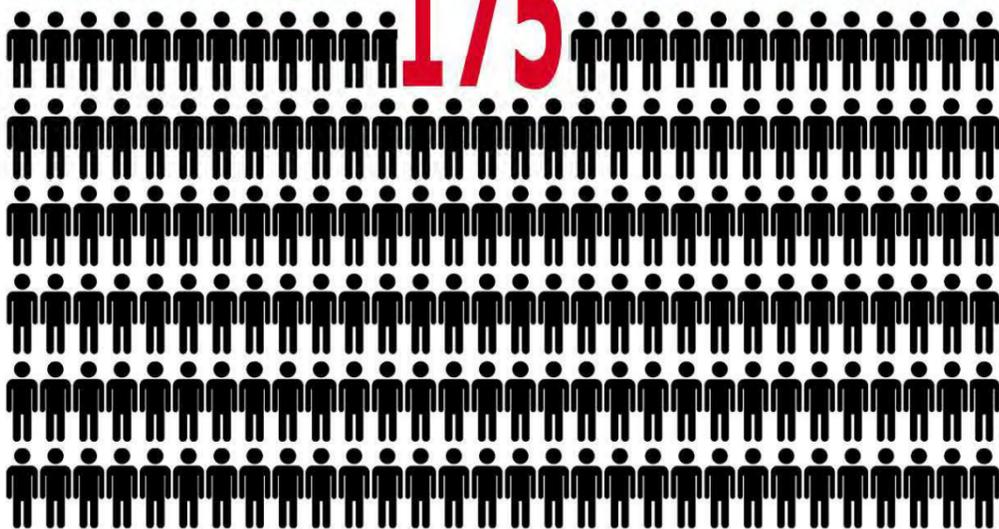
107,375 people died from drug overdoses in 2021

72,000 of those died from fentanyl

99% of fentanyl overdoses are an accident

FENTANYL KILLED MORE PEOPLE IN 2021 THAN SUICIDE, GUN VIOLENCE AND CAR ACCIDENTS.

FENTANYL KILLS **175** PEOPLE EVERY DAY



3 OUT OF EVERY **5** PILLS WITH FENTANYL CONTAIN A POTENTIALLY LETHAL DOSE



AT A GLANCE

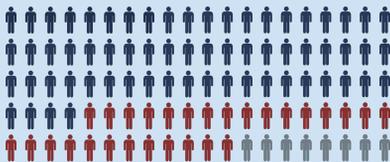
A nationwide surge in fake prescription pills, made and marketed by criminal drug networks, is driving harm, violence, and overdoses across the U.S.



DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS OVER THE LAST YEAR

The U.S. overdose epidemic is driven by fentanyl & methamphetamine

64% of overdose deaths involved synthetic opioids, primarily fentanyl



28% involved psychostimulants, primarily methamphetamine



THE THREAT

1 Fentanyl

Criminal drug networks are flooding the U.S. with fentanyl and fentanyl-laced fake pills, driving the nationwide overdose crisis.

15,000 lbs OF FENTANYL SEIZED IN 2021

Enough to supply a potentially lethal dose to every member of the U.S. population

2 Counterfeit Prescription Pills

Fake pills, marketed as legitimate prescription pills to deceive the American public, are easy to purchase and widely available. Many counterfeit pills are made to look like prescription opioids such as oxycodone (Oxycontin®, Percocet®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), and alprazolam (Xanax®); or stimulants like amphetamines (Adderall®).



Authentic Oxycodone



Counterfeit Oxycodone

20.4 Million Fake Pills Seized in 2021

Today, 4 out of 10 DEA-tested fake pills with fentanyl contain a potentially deadly dose.

3 The Social Media Threat

Drug dealers are now harnessing the accessibility and anonymity of social media apps to push these deadly drugs into our communities faster, cheaper, and easier than ever before.



Known code words and emojis are used to market and sell illicit and deadly drugs on social media.

Fake pills are widely available across every state in the Country.

- DEA and its law enforcement partners are seizing deadly fake pills at record rates.
- Fake pills have been seized in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- Drug trafficking is also inextricably linked with violence.

In 2022, DEA seized more than 50.6 million

50,600,000

**fake pills often laced with fentanyl
-more than double the amount of fentanyl
pills seized in 2021-**



The only safe medications are ones that come from licensed and accredited medical professionals.

DEA warns that pills purchased outside of a licensed pharmacy are illegal, dangerous, and potentially lethal.

For more information about fake pills, go to [DEA.gov/OnePill](https://www.dea.gov/OnePill)

Data as of December 2022



The Drug Enforcement Administration ensures the safety and health of the American public by fighting against violent criminal drug networks and foreign cartels trafficking in illicit drugs. To accomplish that mission, the Drug Enforcement Administration employs approximately 10,000 men and women throughout the world—Special Agents, diversion investigators, intelligence analysts, and chemists—across more than 250 domestic offices in 23 U.S. divisions and more than 90 foreign offices in nearly 70 countries.