

Fentanyl Test Strips

WHAT is fentanyl?

Fentanyl is a potent opioid medication that is used to treat severe pain. Fentanyl is often found contaminating other street drugs, like heroin or cocaine to make them stronger. This creates a higher risk of overdose because a person using drugs may not know fentanyl has been added. You can find more information about fentanyl at <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/fentanyl>.

WHAT are fentanyl test strips?

A fentanyl test strip is a **simple, legal, lifesaving tool** used to tell if fentanyl is mixed with another drug.

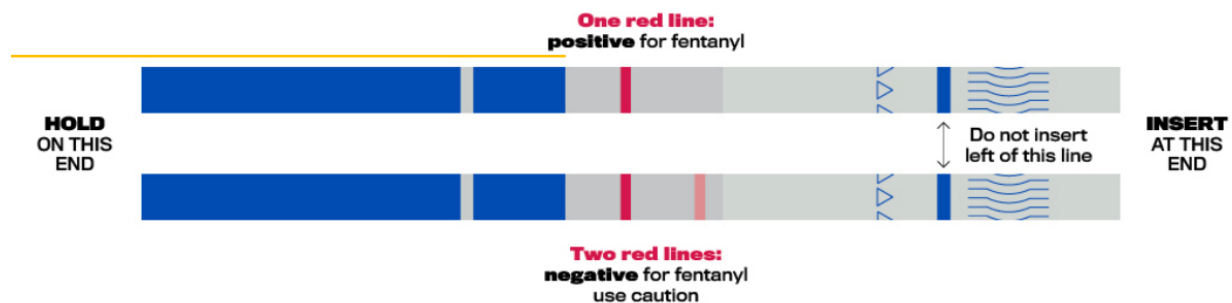


Image credit: www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/fentanyl/fentanyl-test-strips.html

HOW do they work?



- A small paper strip absorbs a diluted sample of the drug to test.
- Like a COVID-19 or pregnancy test, lines appear on the strip to show if fentanyl is present or not, but will not indicate how much.
- Tests only take minutes to use.
- **Important:** Instructions can be different across test strip brands and drugs being tested.

WHY are they important?

- Fentanyl overdose is the leading cause of death in people ages 18-45 in the United States and found in 80% of overdoses (Families Against Fentanyl, 2021).
- Fentanyl test strips **save lives** by reducing overdose risks.
- Three out of four (77%) of young adults find them useful and easy to use (Goldman et al., 2019).



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- Ways most users change their behavior if their drug sample tests positive for fentanyl:
 - Throw away drugs contaminated with fentanyl.
 - Use drugs with other people instead of using alone.
 - Keep naloxone nearby.
 - Share fentanyl test strips with friends to test their drugs before using.

WHERE can I get fentanyl test strips?

Fentanyl test strips **are legal** in Pennsylvania. To find fentanyl test strips, talk to your doctor, local pharmacist, or one of the following organizations that also offer other services to anyone living with a substance use disorder:

- Single County Authority recovery provider: www.ddap.pa.gov/Professionals/Pages/For_SCAs.aspx.
- Centers of Excellence for Opioid Use Disorder: www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/Centers-of-Excellence.aspx.
- The Pennsylvania Harm Reduction Network: www.pahrn.org.
- Your local county overdose prevention coalition.
- NextDistro can send you free test strips if you live in Philadelphia: nextdistro.org/PhillyFentStrips.

PROTECT YOURSELF

If you or someone you know uses drugs, be careful. Always have a friend or family member nearby. Keep naloxone with you. If you have them, use fentanyl test strips to test drugs, and throw away anything that tests positive. Call 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357), or the Never Use Alone hotline (1-800-484-3731) any time, 24/7, to talk to someone who can help you with substance use.

About this document

This resource was developed by Pitt PERU's Overdose Reduction Technical Assistance Center (ORTAC) in support of its vision, "to lead Pennsylvania communities to zero overdoses." Additional resources related to overdose prevention and contact information can be found at www.peru.pitt.edu.

References

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