

# Reducing Overdose Risk

You can use any drug safely, including fentanyl and its analogues, as long as you have the right resources!

- **Use slow/less.** Because fentanyl is so strong, a little goes a long way (compared to heroin!) and overdoses can occur quickly, sometimes before you've finished injecting the dose.
- **Try snorting or smoking instead of injecting.** Injecting carries the highest risk for overdose, so shifting to snorting or smoking may help reduce risk. You can still OD by smoking/snorting, especially with fentanyl, so start slow.
- **Space out doses.** Give yourself time between doses. Fentanyl acts fast, but it's different for everyone, and depending on the dose and your tolerance, it may not hit you as fast as you expect.
- **Practice extra caution when using alone.** Have someone check on you if you like using alone. That way, if you do overdose, someone can intervene.
- **In a group? Stagger your use.** Make sure someone is always alert and that at least one person has naloxone/Narcan on them.
- **Test it.** Knowing what's in your drugs can help you decide how much and how best to use them.
- **Always carry Narcan/naloxone.** Be familiar with the signs of an overdose and be prepared to respond with naloxone, no matter what drug you're using.
- **Listen to your body.** Your overall health impacts your overdose risk. Hydrate, eat, and rest as much as possible.

## Need naloxone/Narcan, fentanyl test strips, and other harm reduction supplies? \*

Syringe Access / Harm Reduction Programming  
**6th Street Harm Reduction Center**  
117 6th Street, btw Mission & Minna  
Mon, Tues, Thurs, & Fri 9am - 7pm,  
Wed 9am - 2pm & 2 - 9pm, Sat 7 - 11pm

### SF AIDS Foundation Mobile Sites (look for the white van!)

Mon: Third St & Innes (Bayview) 4 - 6pm  
Tues: Bikeway behind Safeway @ Church & Market, near Duboce Ave: 6 - 8pm  
Wed: Wiese Alley, off 16th St, btw Mission & Julian: 6 - 8pm  
Thurs: Hemlock Alley, off Polk btw Post & Sutter: 7 - 9pm  
Fri: 16th & Mission, 7 - 9pm

### Glide Harm Reduction Services

330 Ellis, btw Jones & Taylor  
Mon & Tues Noon - 5pm  
Wed - Fri Noon - 5pm

### San Francisco Drug User's Union

149 Turk, btw Jones & Taylor  
Sun - Thurs Noon - 7:30pm

### Homeless Youth Alliance/SFNE

558 Clayton St, off Haight St  
Mon, Wed, & Fri 5:30 - 7:30pm



### St. James Infirmary

234 Eddy, btw Jones & Taylor  
Thurs & Fri 6 - 8pm



**\*Syringe access / harm reduction programming is funded to serve our most vulnerable communities, and we need to reserve our resources for them. Please respect the privacy of these program participants if you are not a harm reduction program participant by accessing a free nasal naloxone kit and training here:**

**CBHS Pharmacy @ 1380 Howard Street (@ 10th St)**  
**Monday - Friday 8am - 3:30pm**

# Fentanyl Use & OD Prevention Tips



The DOPE Project is a program of the Harm Reduction Coalition and is funded by the San Francisco Department of Public Health to coordinate San Francisco's response to drug overdose

Please contact us with any questions or to find out where/how to get naloxone in San Francisco

628-225-2801 or [marshall@harmreduction.org](mailto:marshall@harmreduction.org)



## Fentanyl Facts

- Fentanyl is a strong synthetic opioid that has been used in clinical settings for decades and is often described as 80 -100 times stronger than morphine, or about 50 times stronger than heroin
- Fentanyl is partly responsible for our country's current overdose crisis, combined with a lack of resources and the criminalization of people who use drugs
- Fentanyl moving through the street market in SF comes in a powder form and can be injected, smoked, or snorted. It has also been found in other drugs in SF, like black tar heroin, meth, cocaine, and "fake" pills
- Fentanyl and fentanyl analogues (some stronger than fentanyl, some weaker) are **NOT** "Narcan resistant." They are opioids and will respond to naloxone/Narcan, should someone be overdosing
- You cannot overdose simply by touching fentanyl. It must be introduced into the blood stream or a mucus membrane in order for someone to feel the effects.

## Fentanyl in San Francisco



*Fentanyl is absolutely here!  
(And most likely here to stay!)*

**It's in other drugs.** Currently, most samples of black tar heroin tested throughout the city are coming back positive for the presence of fentanyl. Samples tested in the clinical lab we partner with confirm that fentanyl and some analogues are present in black tar heroin throughout the city. Samples of methamphetamine, cocaine, and counterfeit pills are also testing positive!

**It's being sold as-is.** Fentanyl is being bought and sold knowingly throughout the city, in the form of a white, gray, or tan powder that can be injected, smoked, or snorted.

## Stay vigilant & assume risk!

The street drug supply has always been, and will always be, unpredictable and inconsistent. Assume an overdose risk no matter what drug you're using, and practice as much harm reduction as possible, as consistently as possible: Go slow. Use less. Test your product. If using alone, double down on other strategies. Have someone check on you. Smoke/snort instead of inject. If you're using in a group, stagger your use so someone is always alert. Know the signs of an overdose. Carry naloxone/Narcan and know how to use it. Look out for each other!

## Using Fentanyl

Remember: Fentanyl is about 50 times stronger than heroin. That means the margin of error when using fentanyl is much smaller than when using heroin, so adjust your dose accordingly.

Start off using less and/or slower!

### THINK ABOUT IT LIKE THIS:

**Imagine breaking down a gram of heroin into 50 separate shots. Now imagine that just one of those shots (basically less than half of a half of a point-bag) was as strong as a full gram shot.**

**That's how strong fentanyl is. Of course it depends on the cut and your tolerance, but you get the gist!**



## Wooden/Rigid Chest Syndrome

Synthetic opioids like fentanyl and fentanyl analogues can sometimes cause seizure-like symptoms immediately after use: Muscle spasming, locked limbs, and the chest goes rigid, preventing the person from breathing properly.

Not everyone experiences these symptoms, and it doesn't happen every time.

Should you witness these symptoms, respond like you would to an overdose: Administer a dose of Narcan every two minutes and do your best to breathe for the person!

**Naloxone/Narcan works, and symptoms should relieve in 2-3 minutes!**