

# *Fentanyl Fact Sheet*

## *What is Fentanyl?*

- Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use as an analgesic (pain relief) and anesthetic. It is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin as an analgesic.

## *How it is abused*

- Injected, snorted/sniffed, smokes, taken orally by pill or tablet, and spiked into blotter paper.
- Fentanyl patches are abused by removing its gel contents and then injecting or ingesting these contents. Sometimes users go dumpster diving for fentanyl patches and then putting the used patches under their tongue or in the cheek cavity.

## *Effects*

- Similar to other opioids (like morphine), produces effects such as relaxation, euphoria, pain relief, sedation, confusion, drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, pupillary constriction, and respiratory depression.
- Overdose effects include stupor, pinpoint pupils, cold/clammy skin, cyanosis (bluish color around the mouth from lack of oxygen), coma and respiratory failure leading to death.



# Fentanyl Fact Sheet

## Origin and History of Fentanyl

- Fentanyl was introduced in the 1960s as an intravenous anaesthetic.
- From 2011 through 2018, fatal overdoses associated with clandestine produced fentanyl and fentanyl analogues increased.
- According to the CDC, fentanyl analogues were involved in roughly 2,600 drug overdose deaths each year in 2011 and 2012. From 2011 through 2018, the number increased dramatically with overdose fatalities, ranging from 2,666 in 2011 to 31,335 in 2018.
- A CDC Health Advisory released in Dec. 2020 said the largest increase was from March to May 2020, associated with the sudden measures for the COVID-19 pandemic. The largest monthly increase in synthetic overdose deaths, as the driver, occurred in the 12 months ended in March 2020 (75,696), steadily increasing over 12 months ending in April (77,842), and May (81,230).
- Fentanyl has been showing up in the K.C. metro area, including the Northland, and have been marketed on Snapchat as Percocet stamped pills. Often they are labeled with an M and a 30. They are often light blue or green. Current slang names include *Dance Fever*, *Goodfellas*, *Jackpot*, *Murder 8*, *Tango & Cash*, or most recently, *Green (or blue) Monster*.

## Efforts to Save Opioid Overdose Lives

- Naloxone- a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose. It is an opioid antagonist--meaning that it binds to opioid receptors and can reverse and block the effects of other opioids.
- Harm Reduction Awareness strategies- Do not use drugs alone and knowing what they are using, ensuring that Naloxone is available.
- Provide easy access to Naloxone (prescriptions and providing to family members/friends of known opioid users).
- Education on the harms of misusing prescription medications and the harms of taking unknown medications.

