Fentanyl and other opioids are causing the worst drug crisis in American history. Fentanyl, the most common drug involved in drug overdoses today, is now the leading cause of death of American adults under 50. During a recent Senate hearing on fentanyl, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas described fentanyl as the “single greatest challenge” facing the US. When President Nixon launched the first war on drugs in 1971, he declared drug abuse to be “public enemy number one.” That year 6,771 Americans died due to drugs. According to the latest available public data, a record 106,699 Americans overdosed on drugs in 2021. Most of them, 70,601, died from fentanyl or similar man-made opioids.

The numbers are staggering. And not just in contrast to 1971. On average, 195 people overdose on fentanyl every day; the equivalent of a Boeing 757 crashing and killing everyone on board. Daily. Total Fentanyl overdose deaths are now higher than deaths from [H.I.V. (1995), car crashes (1972) or gun violence](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/04/14/upshot/drug-overdose-epidemic-you-draw-it.html) (1993)—at their peaks.

Exponentially more lethal and potent

Fentanyl kills more people than any other opioid, including prescription pills and heroin, because it is so easy to overdose. Just two milligrams of fentanyl is lethal; a sugar packet sized bag of pure fentanyl, for example, can kill 5,000 people.

so why are so many Americans dying now

Opioid drug overdose fatalities - per capita (1999 - 2021)

But fentanyl isn’t new. Although first developed in 1959 and introduced in the 1960s as an intravenous pain killer, it wasn’t a public health issue until now. How did this happen?

exceeded

This is how.

Most were

Initially driven by the over-prescription of pharmaceutical opioids such as OxyContin, a “second wave” of addiction deaths began as people transitioned from prescription opioids to heroin, a much riskier drug. The so-called “third wave” was marked by the proliferation of potent synthetic opioids such as fentanyl.

Fentanyl is now the leading cause of death for American adults under 50. More people die from Fentanyl overdoses than car accidents, suicide,

* Both sides are responding to grim statistics: The CDC estimates there were [107,477 drug overdose deaths](https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/briefing-room/2023/01/11/dr-rahul-gupta-releases-statement-on-cdcs-new-overdose-death-data-2/) in the 12 months ending in August 2022, while gun violence killed [more than 44,000 Americans](https://www.insider.com/number-of-mass-shootingsin-america-this-year-2022-5) last year.
* For a sense of the magnitude of the problem and how quickly it changed, consider 1999.

Appalachia is the hardest hit.

By 2010, the epidemic spreads beyond the Southwest Border.  addicts begin to turn to heroin, a stronger alternative.

Then, in 2013, the third wave begins, with significant increases in overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids, primarily fentanyl. It's found in combination with heroin, counterfeit pills, and cocaine.

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. WHAT IS ITS ORIGIN?

Fentanyl is the most common drug involved in overdose deaths. according to a Washington Post study of death data for 2021 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is now the leading cause of death for Americans ages 18 to 49, Over 150 people die every day from overdoses related to synthetic opioids like fentanyl. But Fentanyl isn’t new. It was first developed in 1959 and introduced in the 1960s as an intravenous pain killer. What happened?

Even in small doses, it can be deadly. Drugs may contain deadly levels of fentanyl, and you wouldn’t be able to see it, taste it, or smell it. It is nearly impossible to tell if drugs have been laced with fentanyl unless you test your drugs with fentanyl test strips. Inhalation of airborne powder is MOST LIKELY to lead to harmful effects, but is less likely to occur than skin contact. Incidental skin contact may occur during daily activities but is not expected to lead to harmful effects if the contaminated skin is promptly washed off with water

decontamination options

Exposure to fentanyl may be fatal. Due to unintentional fentanyl-related overdose fatalities in multiple states, EPA assessed decontamination options. The August 2021 study and recent EPA webinar reported on the efficacy of each tested decontaminant. The EPA rated Dahlgren Decon “best” among several other remediation choices.

<iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/ko2qDrQ5Zi0?controls=0&amp;start=1328" title="YouTube video player" frameborder="0" allow="accelerometer; autoplay; clipboard-write; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture; web-share" allowfullscreen></iframe>

resulted in this EPA commissioned fentanyl decontamination efficacy study.

scenarios wherein local and state authorities request (technical) support from EPA in the remediation of indoor fentanyl contamination at a home or other facility.

https://evolve-ep.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Remediation-Options-for-Fentanyl-Contaminated-Indoor-Environments.pdf

The Fentanyl Safety Recommendations for First Responders, and this companion training video Fentanyl: The Real Deal, provides unified, scientific, evidence-based recommendations to first responders so they can protect themselves when the presence of Fentanyl is suspected during the course of their daily activities such as responding to overdose calls and conducting traffic stops, arrests, and searches.In 2018, US Customs

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/ershdb/emergencyresponsecard_29750022.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/fentanyl/healthcareprevention.html

It can kill first responders Due to the dangers,

In 2020, OxyContin manufacturer Purdue Pharma agreed to plead guilty to three felony counts and reached a US$8.3 billion settlement with DoJ for its role fueling the opiod crisis

In 2020, OxyContin manufacturer Purdue Pharma agreed to plead guilty to three felony counts and reached an $8.3 billion settlement with Department of Justice for its role fueling the opioid crisis.

video starts during the overview of the efficacy results.