



Increase in Fentanyl-Cut Drugs



OSAM-o-Gram

The Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network

"A lot of stuff is cut with fentanyl to make you crave opiates."
OSAM Akron-Canton participant, January 2018

As reported in OhioMHAS' *News Now* on February 21, 2018¹, the Ohio Department of Health has issued an advisory on the increase in fentanyl-related overdose deaths involving non-opioids, such as cocaine and methamphetamine. This advisory urges first responders to administer naloxone for all drug overdoses, even when non-opioids are suspected.

Several local health departments have issued similar advisories. On January 17, 2018, Columbus Public Health sent out a press release² alerting the public to an increase in overdose deaths where both cocaine and fentanyl were contributors. The release also cautioned the public that fentanyl can be found in any street drug.

Since OSAM's reporting of June 2015 drug trends, participants throughout OSAM regions have reported fentanyl as a top cutting agent (adulterant) for heroin. OSAM's first report of fentanyl as a cut for a non-opioid was in January 2017 when participants in Toledo and Youngstown reported fentanyl as a cut for powdered cocaine, and a law enforcement officer in Youngstown commented, *"They're cutting cocaine with fentanyl, too."* Fentanyl is now believed to be cut into many drugs (see Table 1). This OSAM-O-Gram serves to further caution that fentanyl has increased the lethality of street drugs.

Table 1. Drugs cut with fentanyl as reported by OSAM respondents per reporting period^a.

| January 2017 Report (June 2016 – January 2017) | June 2017 Report (January – June 2017) | January 2018 Report ^b (June 2017 – January 2018) |
|---|--|---|
| Heroin Powdered cocaine | Heroin Powdered cocaine Crack cocaine Prescription opioids ^c Sedative-hypnotics ^c Marijuana Methamphetamine Molly (powdered MDMA) | Heroin Powdered cocaine Crack cocaine Prescription opioids Sedative-hypnotics Marijuana Methamphetamine Molly (powdered MDMA) Ecstasy |

^aReports may be accessed here: <http://mha.ohio.gov/research/osam>.
^bPreliminary data: OSAM's January 2018 Drug Trend Report will be ready for release in June 2018.
^cFentanyl is pressed into pills resembling prescribed medications (e.g., Percocet[®] and Xanax[®]).

Note, OSAM respondents continue to report that they have heard of people who have used marijuana laced with fentanyl, though none of the respondents have experienced this first hand. Some treatment providers have discussed clients testing positive for fentanyl, when reportedly, "these clients only smoke marijuana." However, no law enforcement agency, or crime lab, has substantiated this claim. A crime lab analyst reported that there is no evidence of fentanyl-laced marijuana. The potential for fentanyl-laced marijuana will continue to be monitored by the OSAM Network.

Recommendations¹:

- Administer naloxone in all drug overdoses.
- Help educate about the danger of drugs being mixed with fentanyl.
- Help individuals get access to naloxone.
- Refer to substance abuse treatment.

¹<http://mha.ohio.gov/Portals/0/assets/OhioMHAS%20News%20Now/Feb%2021%202018%20News%20Now.pdf>
²<https://www.columbus.gov/publichealth/press/Community-Advisory-for-Increase-in-Overdose-Deaths-with-both-Cocaine-and-Fentanyl-in-System/>

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