

Carfentanil

What is Carfentanil?



Carfentanil (*also known as carfentanyl*) is similar to the synthetic opioid analgesic fentanyl. It is one of the most potent opioids known. Potency is approximately 10,000 times stronger than morphine and 100 times stronger than fentanyl. Street drugs may vary in strength. It is a general anesthetic designed for large animals. Carfentanil is a white powdery substance resembling heroin.

Exposure

Carfentanil is mixed with heroin or pressed into illicitly sold pills that resemble prescription pills. A person using this product may not be aware of the presence of carfentanyl and the fatal consequences of this opioid.

It can be snorted, smoked, injected, or absorbed through the skin. Because it can be absorbed through the skin, the drug poses an additional risk to law enforcement officials during drug seizures and emergency responders treating overdose patients.

Misuse of narcotic medication can cause addiction, overdose, or death, especially in a child or other person using the medicine without a prescription.

Health Effects

The drug, which is not intended for use in humans, is potentially lethal when used in combination with heroin and can quickly reach toxic levels in the human body. A drop of carfentanil when absorbed by the skin of a person following accidental contact could result in death.

Exposure to carfentanil causes symptoms similar to those of opioid toxicity and overdose including:

- Pinpoint pupils
- Shallow breathing
- Dizziness
- Lethargy
- Loss of consciousness
- Nausea/ vomiting
- Weak pulse
- Cold/ clammy skin
- Coma
- Heart failure
- Death

Treatment

The extreme potency of carfentanil makes overdose a very likely possibility. Treatment of an overdose may require multiple doses of Naloxone or Narcan; however treatment may not be effective. Call 911 immediately upon recognition of exposure or overdose.

Prevention

Use extreme caution when handling suspected illicitly manufactured fentanyl, white powders, and unknown substances. Use appropriate safety precautions and personal protective equipment. Carry a supply of naloxone or Narcan so that it can be administered immediately to mitigate the effects of the overdose.

Training and Naloxone rescue kits are available to those who use opioids or family/friends of users. For more information contact the St. Clair County Health Department (810) 987-5300.



For more sources of information on this topic visit:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION www.cdc.gov