



MICHIGAN POISON CENTER
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Monday May 17th, 2021

The Michigan Poison Center at the Wayne State University School of Medicine is issuing a warning concerning the public health threat related to a recent spike in fatal fentanyl-related overdoses in both Cass and Van Buren counties. These deaths have already equaled or surpassed totals from 2020.

Fentanyl is a highly potent synthetic opioid used to treat patients with severe pain. It is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin.

Fentanyl can cause severe symptoms, including sedation, slowed or absent breathing, and coma. Users may not be aware of the presence of fentanyl in recreational and illicit drug supplies, including heroin and cocaine. Fentanyl has been substituted for various opioids such as oxycodone bought illicitly or on the Internet. Unexpected fentanyl, especially when mixed with or substituted for other medications, puts the unsuspecting user at high risk for drug-related respiratory failure with subsequent brain damage or death.

The Michigan Poison Center strongly suggests obtaining the opioid antagonist naloxone in case of inadvertent overdose. Please contact the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) at 800-662-4357 to find resources and connect with local substance abuse treatment centers. You may also call [Never Use Alone](#) at 800-484-3731 or visit [NeverUseAlone.com](#) for help.

Call **911 immediately** if you suspect someone has used a fentanyl-laced substance and is not breathing. Naloxone may be life-saving, but is not a replacement for emergency medical care. For questions regarding fentanyl or any other substances, call the Michigan Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. Health care professionals seeking information and/or treatment recommendations for symptoms related to this or any other substance can request to speak with board-certified toxicologists.

Clinicians who suspect cases that may be related to fentanyl should call the Michigan Poison Center. Please also report any cases to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Drug Poisoning Surveillance Team at MDHHS-MODASurveillance@michigan.gov.

The [Michigan Poison Center](#) is available day or night, every day of the year. If you have questions or concerns about substance use, drug safety, or any other poison-related issue, call 1-800-222-1222.