Fentanyl is only one of many drugs that can cause overdose.

Signs of an overdose include: slow, shallow breathing, choking, limp body, pale/blue/cold skin, falling asleep or lack of consciousness, and very small pupils. ***If you think someone is overdosing, call 911 immediately and administer naloxone (Narcan) if available.***

Fentanyl test strips are not 100% accurate, and can produce false positives or false negatives.

A negative result does not mean a sample is safe to consume. These strips are not guaranteed to detect all forms of fentanyl. You could overdose even if the strip says there is no fentanyl in your heroin, cocaine, or other drugs. No drug use is 100% safe. Fentanyl test strips are only able to detect certain types of fentanyls like Carfentanil, Acetyl Fentanyl, Butyryl Fentanyl, Remifentanil, Ocfentanil, Sufentanil, p-Fluoro Fentanyl, Furanyl Fentanyl, Valeryl Fentanyl, and 3-Methyl Fentanyl.

The test strips can produce a false positive if stimulants are present in the substance. A false positive means the test strip displays one red line (fentanyl present), but there is no fentanyl in the tested sample. If you are testing methamphetamine, MDMA, or cocaine, mix a very small amount of the drug (about the size of a grain of rice) in 30-50mL of water (about 1 shot glass of water) until it is completely dissolved. Stimulants can give a false positive test result if they are too concentrated.

The test strips can produce a false negative if very small amounts of Carfentanil are present. A false negative means the test strip displays two red lines (fentanyl not present), but there is actually fentanyl present in the tested sample. If you think that your substance may contain Carfentanil, mix a sample in a very small amount of water until it is completely dissolved.

To be safe, it is best to test everything that you intend to consume. Fentanyl test strips can be used as a tool to prevent unintentional fentanyl exposure and accidental opioid overdose. It is important to note that fentanyl does not evenly distribute when it is mixed into substances. ***A negative result does not mean that fentanyl is not present or that there is no risk of overdose.*** Drugs should always be used with caution.

Other measures that can be taken to reduce risk include: using with someone else present, having naloxone available, and using a smaller initial dose. Naloxone is a medication that quickly reverses an opioid overdose. When an overdose occurs with fentanyl, a higher amount of naloxone is needed reverse the overdose. If the first dose of naloxone does not reverse the overdose symptoms in 2-3 minutes, give a second dose. Naloxone is available in a nasal spray and injectable form at most pharmacies, and for free at harm reduction organizations.

People who use fentanyl test strips accept all responsibility for any injury, or death that could occur after taking drugs, whether they have been tested, or not tested, for fentanyl.
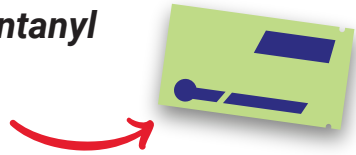
Drug checking with Fentanyl test strips

A step-by-step guide

CDPH
Chicago Department of Public Health

Call the Illinois Opioid Helpline at:
1-833-2-FINDHELP

How to use a fentanyl test strip
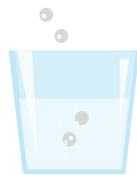
This is a fentanyl test strip

1 Add a tiny amount of substance *(about the size of a half grain of rice)* to a half shot glass of water (about 15ml).

If you are testing meth, cocaine, MDMA or another stimulant, use a full shot glass of water (30ml)
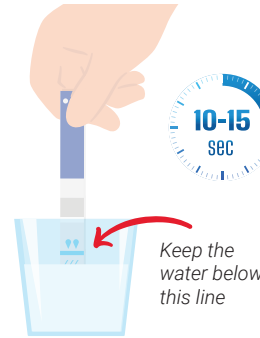
You can use a 30ml ketchup cup like the one in this kit.

2 Mix the powder into the water until it is completely dissolved.

If you are testing something that is not powder, crush it first.

3 Hold the solid blue end of the test strip and dip the other end in the water for about 10-15 seconds.

10-15 sec

Keep the water below this line

4 Take the strip out of the water and lay it on a flat surface. Wait for about 60 seconds.

60 sec

5 Look at the strip under bright light. Even very light red lines count!

ONE (1) red line = FENTANYL PRESENT

TWO (2) red lines = NO fentanyl present

Check the strip within 10 minutes of testing. Throw the strip away when done.

Interpreting the results

+ Positive test

One line means fentanyl detected.

– Negative test

Two lines means no fentanyl detected.

? Inconclusive / Invalid test

The top red line (closest to the solid blue) should always show up on the strip. If it doesn't, the test is invalid. Stirring or wetting above the solid line may result in an invalid test.

Fentanyl test strips only tell you if fentanyl is present in the sample tested. They do not tell you **how much** fentanyl is present.

A negative test result does not mean the substance is safe. Fentanyl test strips are not 100% accurate.

*If you think someone is overdosing, **call 911** immediately and administer naloxone if available.*

CDPH | Call the Illinois Opioid Helpline at: **1-833-2-FINDHELP**