



# HOW TO TEST YOUR DRUGS FOR FENTANYL

## WHAT IS FENTANYL?

**F**ENTANYL and various fentanyl analogs are highly potent synthetic opioids between fifty and many hundreds of times stronger than heroin. They are primarily responsible for the twenty-fold increase in heroin-related fatalities since 2013. Many people have also died after consuming counterfeit pharmaceutical pills containing fentanyl, and more recently fentanyl-laced cocaine, and other drugs have begun killing people.

**Note:** The term “fentanyl” refers to fentanyl itself, as well as numerous analogs such as acetyl-fentanyl, furanyl-fentanyl, carfentanil, and others. Some analogs, such as carfentanil, are so strong that a fatal dose is invisible to the naked eye.

## ABOUT OUR TESTING STRIPS

If used correctly, our fentanyl testing strips can detect fentanyl and most of its known analogs, including carfentanil. However, they cannot detect all of them. A negative result, therefore, does not guarantee the drugs you tested are free from all fentanyl analogs or other dangerous synthetic opioids.

**WARNING!** Fentanyl test strips from other sources may not work the same. We conducted an independent study in conjunction with the University of California assessing a variety of testing strips sold on the market. Out of five different strips we tested, four could not detect carfentanil and one from a Chinese manufacturer did not work at all.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO KNOW ABOUT FENTANYL

When fentanyl (or a fentanyl analog) is mixed with heroin, cocaine or other drugs, it is **NEVER** mixed evenly. Powder from one side of a baggie (or on one edge of a pressed tablet) may contain no fentanyl at all, yet powder from the other side may contain a fatal dose. This is called the “chocolate chip cookie effect” and is why it is important to test every bit of the drug you intend to consume.

### METHOD #1

#### TESTING EVERYTHING YOU INTEND TO CONSUME

The best method for testing powders, crystals or tablets is to test every bit you intend to consume. This requires dissolving your entire dose in water, which means you will need to drink your dose if you decide to take it. For drugs like cocaine or meth that many people like to insufflate (snort), drinking it will still work. It will take longer to feel the effects, but they will last longer.

1. Place all of the drug you intend to consume into a small glass or ceramic cup.
2. Add water.
  - If you are testing methamphetamine or MDMA, add one teaspoon of water (about 5ml) for each 10mg of crystal or powder. It is important to get this ratio correct because meth and MDMA give false positives if they are too concentrated. Specifically, you need to dilute down to about 2mg/ml, but not too much more than that. This is about one teaspoon for every 10mg. This method will avoid false positives yet still be able to detect a fatal dose of fentanyl, carfentanil and most other fentanyl analogs.
  - If you are testing cocaine, or any drug other than methamphetamine or MDMA, add two teaspoons of water per 100mg of powder. This is approximately 10mg/ml. This is an ideal dilution to detect fentanyl and most of its analogs in powdered drugs.
3. Stir the contents until it is thoroughly dissolved. (Binder materials in tablets may not completely dissolve.)
4. Hold the blue end of the test strip and insert the other end into the liquid, no higher than the blue line.
5. Allow the liquid to travel up the strip into the test area. (This takes about 15 seconds.)
6. Set the strip down on a flat surface and wait about two minutes. See “Interpreting the results” on reverse side ->



*Prince died after accidentally consuming counterfeit Vicodin pills that actually contained fentanyl.*



*The fentanyl may be here. Because of the chocolate chip cookie effect, you need to test every bit you intend to consume.*

**BEFORE USING THE STRIPS, READ ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS TWICE.**

For the latest instructions visit: [www.dancesafe.org/fentanyl](http://www.dancesafe.org/fentanyl)

## METHOD #2: TESTING THE RESIDUE INSIDE YOUR BAGGIE

**CAUTION!** This is NOT the recommended method for testing. The best method is to test every bit you intend to consume. However, some people may not be willing to dissolve their entire dose of drugs in water every time they partake. In that case, the next best method is to test the residue stuck to the inside of the baggie the drugs came in. This method may not detect fentanyl due to the chocolate chip cookie effect, but it is better than not testing at all.

1. Empty the powder or crystals inside your baggie into another container.
  - If you are testing cocaine that is pressed into a rock, grind it or crush it up first, then put it back into the baggie before emptying it again. This way if there was fentanyl inside the rock, you increase the chance of some of it sticking to the inside of the baggie.
2. Put about half a teaspoon of water into the baggie and swish it around to dissolve the residue. (A half teaspoon is about 2.5ml.)
  - If you are testing methamphetamine or MDMA, you may need to add more water depending on how much residue is stuck to the inside of the baggie. Dilute down to at least 2mg/ml to avoid false positives. If you think there is more than 4mg of residue in the baggie, you may need to add an entire teaspoon of water (5ml) or even more.
3. Hold the blue end of the test strip and insert the other end into the liquid, no higher than the blue line.
4. Allow the liquid to travel up the strip into the test area. (This takes about 15 seconds.)
5. Set the strip down on a flat surface and wait about two minutes. See "Interpreting the results" below.



*Most powder or crystal drugs are sold in small, plastic zip-lock baggies. They may also be tied up in a small, plastic bindles. If so, you will need to transfer them into a bag first.*



## INSTRUCTIONS FOR IV DRUG USERS

If you inject heroin or other drugs, you should really test every time you inject. The easiest method is to test the residue from your spoon or cooker.

1. After preparing your shot, set the needle aside and wait to inject.
2. Add about 1ml (1/4 of a teaspoon) of clean water into the spoon or cooker.
3. Hold the blue end of the test strip and insert the other end into the liquid.
4. Allow the liquid to travel up the strip into the test area. (This may take 30 seconds.)
5. Set the strip down on a flat surface and wait about two minutes. See "Interpreting the results" below.

## INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

One red line on top is a **POSITIVE** result for the presence of fentanyl or one of its analogs. Two red lines is a **NEGATIVE** result. No red lines (or one red line on the bottom) means the test is invalid. (Usually this happens because the liquid did not travel far enough up the testing strip.)



**The lower red line here may be lighter than the upper red line. That is still a negative result.**

**Disclaimer:** DanceSafe's fentanyl test strips are provided for harm reduction use only. They cannot detect every fentanyl analog, nor can they detect other synthetic opioids. A negative test result does not mean a sample is safe to consume. No drug use is 100% safe. For the newest information about fentanyl, see: [dancesafe.org/fentanyl](https://dancesafe.org/fentanyl)

DanceSafe is a nonprofit public health and harm reduction organization. We provide non-judgmental information and services to help people who use drugs make healthy, informed choices. The safest way to avoid the harms from drugs is not to use them, but if you choose to use, use as safely as possible.