



Counterfeit Pills

What are they?

Counterfeit pills are fake medications. They may contain fentanyl or methamphetamine and are extremely dangerous because they often appear identical to legitimate prescription pills.



Oxycodone: Authentic (left) and counterfeit (right)

What is their origin?

Counterfeit pills are usually produced in substandard conditions, labeled incorrectly, and may include dangerous and deadly substances. Online sales via internet marketplaces and social media are the major sources for obtaining counterfeit pills.

What do they look like?

Counterfeit pills are nearly identical to prescription medications. They may resemble oxycodone, alprazolam (Xanax), Adderall, and other medications. Students may purchase Xanax for anxiety, and Adderall in the belief that it will aid their academics, with many of these purchases made on the internet or social media sites. Many of these sites sell counterfeit versions of these drugs tainted with fentanyl and/or meth, which can lead to death.



Adderall: Authentic (left) and counterfeit (right)

What are their effects on the body?

Counterfeit pills that contain fentanyl can be deadly. A lethal dose of fentanyl is about two milligrams, equivalent in size to a few grains of salt.



A lethal dose of fentanyl

Counterfeit pills containing methamphetamine are highly addictive and act on the central nervous system. Taking even small amounts of meth can result in wakefulness, increased physical activity, decreased appetite, rapid breathing and heart rate, irregular heartbeat, increased blood pressure, and hyperthermia (overheating).



Xanax: Authentic (left) and counterfeit (right)

What are the overdose effects?

Fentanyl overdose may result in changes in pupil size, cold and clammy skin, coma, and respiratory failure leading to death. Methamphetamine overdose may result in death from stroke, heart attack, or multiple organ problems caused by overheating. The best way to avoid counterfeit medication is to take only medications prescribed by a licensed medical professional and dispensed by a registered pharmacist.

For drug prevention information, visit DEA's websites:

GetSmartAboutDrugs.com

For Parents, Caregivers, and Educators

JustThinkTwice.com

For Teens

CampusDrugPrevention.gov

For Colleges and Universities

dea.gov