


Fentanyl Use YRBS Question Fact Sheet

In 2022, nearly 74,000 people died from overdose related to synthetic opioids like fentanyl. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid commonly prescribed for severe pain. It is available in various forms, including **powder, pills,** and **blotter paper**. Fentanyl is often illegally made and mixed with other drugs, such as heroin or stimulants. The potency of fentanyl—**50 to 100 times stronger than morphine**—increases the risk of overdose, especially among individuals who are unaware of its presence in other substances. Fentanyl is a major contributor to fatal overdoses, which contributes to nearly **70% of all overdose deaths** in the United States.

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) optional question asks about fentanyl use among youth:

Q: Fentanyl is a pain medicine that can be sold as powder, pills, or blotter paper. It can also be mixed with other drugs, such as heroin. During your life, how many times have you used fentanyl without a doctor's prescription?

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- a) 0 times
 - b) 1 or 2 times
 - c) 3 to 9 times
 - d) 10 to 19 times
 - e) 20 to 39 times
 - f) 40 or more times

Why is it important to collect data on fentanyl use from youth with YRBS?

- **Tailored Interventions:** Frequent fentanyl use significantly increases the risk of substance use disorders and adverse health effects. Understanding usage patterns helps tailor health interventions to those most at risk.
- **Resource Allocation:** Data on fentanyl use frequency among youth enables more effective distribution of prevention and treatment resources, ensuring they reach those with the greatest need.
- **Policy Development:** Insights from this data aid in crafting evidence-based policies and programs that address the specific needs of youth at risk of fentanyl exposure.
- **Understanding the Scope of the Problem:** Youth who frequently use fentanyl may be at greater risk for developing a substance use disorder or experiencing an overdose, which can help tailor prevention and intervention strategies.

Please Share!

The fentanyl question above in YRBS to:

- Enhance our understanding of youth fentanyl use patterns.
- Contribute to a comprehensive, data-driven approach to combat the opioid crisis.

