



# How to Safely Manage Fentanyl Contamination

## A Guide for School Staff

### The problem with fentanyl

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine and is approved as a pharmaceutical to treat severe pain, but it is sometimes sold through illegal markets. It is often mixed with heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine as a combination product—with or without the user’s knowledge—to increase euphoric effects. Fentanyl use is increasing statewide, and overdoses and deaths are occurring in young people. Drugs containing fentanyl have been observed on school property, posing a risk to staff or other students.

Fentanyl is dangerous when it is swallowed, injected, or breathed in, and can result in overdose or death. Skin contact with fentanyl-containing powder or pills is not likely to cause harmful effects and can be prevented by wearing gloves. If you come in skin contact with fentanyl, do not use hand sanitizer. Instead, wash affected areas with soap and water.

### Managing possible fentanyl contamination in schools

During an overdose incident, school staff may be the first ones to respond. School staff should be mindful of contamination at the site of the overdose or in an area, such as a locker, containing a student’s personal belongings. Any staff investigating the incident should work in pairs and wear gloves.

#### Scenario 1: Staff see visible powder or residue.

School staff who observe a powder or residue (of any color) near the scene of the overdose or in or near the student’s personal belongings should:

- ✓ Avoid cleaning up the area unless specially trained to do so.
- ✓ Limit access to affected areas for follow-up actions by trained personnel.
- ✓ Contact local law enforcement to report the powder and the approximate amount of powder you see. A Hazardous Materials (HazMat) team may be needed to clean up large amounts of powder (see example to right).

#### Scenario 2: Staff do not see any visible contamination.

If NO visible powder or residue is present and cleaning of an area or locker is needed, school staff can safely treat and clean any potentially affected surfaces:

- ✓ Put on nitrile or latex gloves and safety glasses or goggles.
- ✓ Wash the surface with soapy water and allow the surface to dry.
- ✓ Mix 1 cup of household bleach with 1 gallon of water. Apply and keep the surface wet with this bleach solution for at least 5 minutes before allowing the surface to dry.
- ✓ Wash the surface again with soapy water, rinse it, and dry it off.



Fentanyl is hard to detect, and dangerous!

You can’t see it, taste it, or smell it. Two milligrams—as little as several grains of salt—is enough to kill someone.

*Photo source: United States Drug Enforcement Administration*



Don’t touch powders! Leave powders for trained professionals to clean up.



**Questions about this guidance? Call the Wisconsin Department of Health Services at 608-266-1120 or send us an email at [DHSEnvHealth@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSEnvHealth@dhs.wisconsin.gov).**

