

Dec 15

# Fentanyl Poisoning is Now #1 Cause of Death in Adults 18-45 in the U.S.

*Fentanyl Deaths Doubled Since 2019*  
*Fentanyl Deaths Hit Record 64,178 Deaths*

Akron, Ohio – A new Families Against Fentanyl analysis shows that fentanyl poisoning is now the leading cause of death for young adults in the United States, responsible for more than 64,000 deaths per year in the U.S.

Families Against Fentanyl analyzed the latest drug "overdose" data from the Centers for Disease Control and found that fentanyl poisoning is now the leading cause of death in adults 18-45 years old. Drug overdose deaths surpassed 100,000 per year for the first time in 2021. The skyrocketing death toll is driven largely by illicit fentanyl which is being laced into counterfeit pills and street drugs at alarming rates across the nation. The number of fentanyl deaths approximately doubled in just two years, rising from 32,754 fatalities for the year ending April 2019 to 64,178 for the year ending April 2021 (the latest data available).

In an analysis of CDC data, Families Against Fentanyl found that more adults age 18-45 died of drug poisoning involving fentanyl (synthetic opioids other than methadone) last year than any other leading cause of death, including suicide, motor vehicle accidents, Covid-19 and cancer. In 2020 alone, more Americans died of fentanyl poisoning than in the entire nearly decade long war in Afghanistan. [Fentanyl poisoning killed more Americans in 2020 than car accidents, gun violence, breast cancer and suicide.](#)

New data out from the CDC shows that 42,602 drug overdose deaths were reported in the first five months of 2021, which is an increase of more than 1,000 deaths per month compared to 2020 (8,520 deaths per month in first five months of 2021; 7,517 deaths per month in same period of 2020). Overall drug overdose deaths increased by 28.5 percent in just 12 months. Deaths from fentanyl poisoning rose even faster, increasing by 49 percent in the same 12 month period.

"This is a national emergency. America's young adults, thousands of unsuspecting Americans, are being poisoned," said James Rauh of Akron, Ohio, the founder of Families Against Fentanyl who lost his son to fentanyl poisoning. "It is widely known that illicit fentanyl is driving the massive spike in drug-related deaths. A new approach to this catastrophe is needed. Declaring illicit fentanyl a Weapon of Mass Destruction would activate additional and necessary federal resources to root out the international manufacturers and traffickers of illicit fentanyl and save American lives."

"Fentanyl has been found in all the drug supply. That's why anyone using drugs, not just opioids, should carry naloxone," said Dr. Roneet Lev, emergency physician and former Chief Medical Officer of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. "The only safe place to obtain drugs is the pharmacy."

Bipartisan leaders including former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and former CIA Director John Brennan have joined with Families Against Fentanyl to warn of the national security threat posed by illicit fentanyl and urged President Biden to designate illicit fentanyl and its analogues as weapons of mass destruction. Nearly 20,000 Americans have joined the call by signing FAF's petition.



25,000+ People Demand Federal Government Declare Illicit Fentanyl a Weapon of Mass Destruction

Enough Fentanyl to Kill More Than 50 Million People Seized in a Single Residence



Families Against Fentanyl®



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