

# FAST FACTS ON FENTANYL

## AND PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM DIGITAL DEALERS



# Fast Facts On Fentanyl

Criminal drug networks are mass-producing fake pills and selling them online as legitimate prescription pills. Fake prescription pills are easily accessible and often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms, making them available to anyone with a smartphone, including minors.



## APPROX. 100 TIMES MORE POTENT

Fentanyl is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin.



## JUST 2 MILLIGRAMS CAN BE LETHAL

Just 2 milligrams of fentanyl can be lethal, equivalent in size to a few grains of salt.



## A 50-FOLD INCREASE IN JUST THREE YEARS

According to a report from the National Institutes of Health, law enforcement across the country seized nearly 10 million counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl in 2021.



## 6 OUT OF EVERY 10 PILLS CONTAIN A POTENTIALLY LETHAL DOSE

DEA lab testing reveals that 6 out of every 10 pills with fentanyl contain a potentially lethal dose.



## COUNTERFEIT PILLS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN ALL 50 STATES

DEA and its law enforcement partners are seizing deadly fake pills at record rates. Counterfeit pills have been identified in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

# Digital Dealers

## Not exclusive to the Dark Web

*In a December 16, 2021, press conference, U.S. DEA Administrator, Anne Milgram gave the below remarks addressing how drug traffickers use social media and other digital methods for illicit sales.*

**Criminal drug traffickers** have found a new tool to pump poison into our communities. They **have turned our smartphones into a one-stop shop to market, to sell, and to deliver deadly drugs.** Drug traffickers are using mainstream social media apps. **They target** people of all ages: A curious **teenager** ordering a pill online. **A college student** trying a pill from a friend. An **elderly** neighbor **searching online** for a painkiller.

**Drug cartels** have chosen to **use social media to** expand their business for several reasons: it's widely accessible, it's easy to use, drug traffickers can **hide their identities**, they can **lie about what they are selling**, and most importantly, the sites permit the sale of counterfeit pills every day to go unchecked.

These criminal drug networks are misrepresenting what they're selling. **People think that they are buying real** Xanax **pills**, real Adderall pills, real Oxycodone pills, **using online platforms they trust, when in fact they are getting fentanyl, in pills that look just like the real thing.**

Criminal drug networks are now front and center on social media, with us whenever our smartphones are. Known **emojis** and code words **are being widely used as signals online, in the online buying and selling of deadly drugs** like fentanyl and fentanyl-laced fake pills.

That means that **these deadly drugs are** reaching our communities faster, easier, and cheaper than ever before. They are **just one click away.**

**“THE DRUG DEALER ISN'T JUST STANDING ON A STREET CORNER ANYMORE. IT'S SITTING IN A POCKET ON YOUR PHONE.”**

Anne Milgram, administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration  
via The Washington Post

# Emerging Threat

## Nitazenes

In April 2022, Attorney General Ashley Moody filed an emergency rule to add eight deadly synthetic opioids to the Schedule I of controlled substances in Florida. The drugs, categorized as nitazenes, have no medical use and can cause adverse health effects, including overdose deaths. These synthetic opioids are linked to at least 15 deaths in Florida since 2020, including two in Pasco County.

The eight synthetic opioids Attorney General Moody added to the Schedule I of controlled substances in Florida:

 **N-PYRROLIDINO ETONITAZENE**  
10x more potent than fentanyl

 **ETODESNITAZENE**  
Up to 10x more potent than fentanyl

 **ISOTONITAZENE**  
5x more potent than fentanyl

 **PROTONITAZENE**  
2x more potent than fentanyl

 **METONITAZENE**  
Equipotent to fentanyl

 **BUTONITAZENE**  
20x less potent than fentanyl

 **METODESNITAZENE**  
100x less potent than fentanyl

 **FLUNITAZENE**  
100x less potent than fentanyl

**"SOME NITAZENES ARE MANY TIMES MORE LETHAL THAN FENTANYL AND WE MUST MAKE SURE THEY DO NOT BECOME MORE PREVALENT IN OUR STATE, OR I AM AFRAID WE WILL SEE OVERDOSE DEATHS SKYROCKET."**

*-Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody*

Forensic labs in Florida first began identifying cases of nitazenes in 2020. Since then, 268 cases have been identified; however, the prevalence of these substances likely exceed those reported.

The number of nitazene cases rose to 171 in 2021, compared to 13 found in 2020. As of March 18, 84 cases had been identified in Florida. Nitazenes may appear in many common forms, including powder, liquid and counterfeit prescription pills.

“ Marc Berkman, chief executive of the Organization for Social Media Safety, said the nonprofit ran an informal test and found they were **able to connect with drug dealers on multiple social media sites in under three minutes.** ”

-via Lerman, Rachel and De Vynck, Gerrit. "Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram face pressure to stop illegal drug sales as overdose deaths soar" *The Washington Post, September 28, 2021.*

# Social Media Demographics

*Some of the most popular platforms and their current audiences*



# of Monthly Active Users: **1 Billion**

Largest Age Group: **10-19 (25%)**

Gender: **61% Female**  
**39% Male**

Time spent per day: **89 Min.**



# of Monthly Active Users: **319 Million**

Largest Age Group: **15-25 (48%)**

Gender: **54.4% Female**  
**44.6% Male**

Time spent per day: **25+ Min.**



# of Monthly Active Users: **2 Billion**

Largest Age Group: **25-34 (31.2%)**  
with 18-24 close behind at 31%

Gender: **48.4% Female**  
**51.8% Male**

Time spent per day: **25+ Min.**



# of Monthly Active Users: **2.91 billion**

Largest Age Group: **25-34 (31.5%)**

Gender: **43% Female**  
**57% Male**

Time spent per day: **33 Min.**

*\*based on numbers published March 2, 2022  
via Sprout Social*

“Certain emojis that we have uncovered in our investigations show that drug traffickers and our youth are using emojis to communicate regarding drugs, buying drugs and trying to obtain drugs.”

Deanne L. Reuter, special agent in charge of the DEA Miami division



# Emoji Drug Codes

via US Drug Enforcement Administration

## COMMON EMOJI CODES

### FAKE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**PERCOCET & OXYCODONE**

**XANAX**

**ADDERALL**

### DEALER SIGNALS

**DEALER ADVERTISING**

**HIGH POTENCY**

**UNIVERSAL FOR DRUGS**

**LARGE BATCH**

### OTHER DRUGS

**METH**

**HEROIN**

**COCAINE**

**MDMA & MOLLIES**

**MUSHROOMS**

**COUGH SYRUP**

**MARIJUANA**

*This reference guide is intended to give parents, caregivers, educators, and other influencers a better sense of how emojis are being used in conjunction with illegal drugs. Fake prescription pills, commonly laced with deadly fentanyl and methamphetamine, are often sold on social media and e-commerce platforms – making them available to anyone with a smartphone.*

# A Report From A Non-Profit Dedicated to Internet Safety

Reporting illicit sales to these platforms isn't enough. Digital dealers are savvy and always looking for ways to circumvent security settings within social media platforms. In their *Digital Weeds 2021* report, the Digital Citizens Alliance found that dealers with previously reported accounts soliciting sales of these dangerous drugs were able to create new accounts and continue pushing them into communities.



- The **platforms enable communications between drug pushers and potential buyers.** Whether by containing phone numbers and emails in videos and/or posts or enabling conversations to happen in chats.
- The **platforms' algorithms amplify connectivity between potential buyers and sellers of illegal and/or illicit items.** Researchers, acting as potential buyers looking for drugs, showed that when they look for drugs on Instagram, Instagram's algorithm will in turn begin directing drug sellers back to the potential buyer.
- When outed by media outlets, platforms will often take down specific videos mentioned by reporters, but not address the larger problem. This **leaves consumers vulnerable to similar, or sometimes even the same scams**, that inspired the news coverage in the first place.

# Resources

**Get Smart About Drugs: A DEA Resource for Parents, Educators & Caregivers**

[www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov/](http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov/)

**One Pill Can Kill**

[www.dea.gov/onepill](http://www.dea.gov/onepill)

**Dose of Reality**

[doseofrealityfl.com/](http://doseofrealityfl.com/)

**National Institute of Drug Abuse on Drug Abuse for Teens**

[teens.drugabuse.gov/](http://teens.drugabuse.gov/)

**Song For Charlie- Real Talk About Fake Pills**

[www.songforcharlie.org/](http://www.songforcharlie.org/)

**The Facts.Your Future.**

[www.thefactsyourfuture.org](http://www.thefactsyourfuture.org)