

Understanding the Fentanyl Drug Abuse Overdose Epidemic

by Evolve Indy | Dec 1, 2022 | Blog



Since the COVID-19 outbreak started, the number of deaths caused by fentanyl has been going up, according to the CDC. In fact, around 64,000 Americans have died from an overdose of fentanyl, a drug that is allowed to treat severe pain but is often cut into heroin, fake prescription pills, and illegal stimulants. Why is fentanyl so dangerous and addictive?



Why Is Fentanyl Dangerous?

Overdosing on fentanyl is common due to the drug's extreme potency and the difficulty of accurately dosing its effects due to the little amount required to produce them.

Interestingly, however, when administered properly, fentanyl poses no more risk than any other opioid. The issue is that it is not always administered correctly, and all opioids carry risks and are addictive, if nothing else.

On top of that, quality control for non-commercial or street-bought fentanyl is low because the manufacturing process is not governed – as you might expect. Over the past few years, the mortality toll from prescription opioids and heroin has been relatively stable, while deaths related to fentanyl have risen dramatically.

Fentanyl is prevalent in many counterfeit prescription opioids and benzodiazepine pills acquired on the street, and it has practically overtaken heroin in many places.

Unreported fentanyl content has been found in both methamphetamine and cocaine.

It's easy to take too much of because of how powerful it is. It just takes a tiny amount of pure fentanyl, smaller than a pinhead, to cause deadly respiratory depression or even unconsciousness.

How To Reduce The Problem

Opioid overdose deaths are most commonly caused by fentanyl, and this risk remains even in the safe hospital environment when it is used for pain relief. When using fentanyl outside of a medical facility, there is no one to keep an eye on a patient's respiration rate in real-time to prevent overdose.

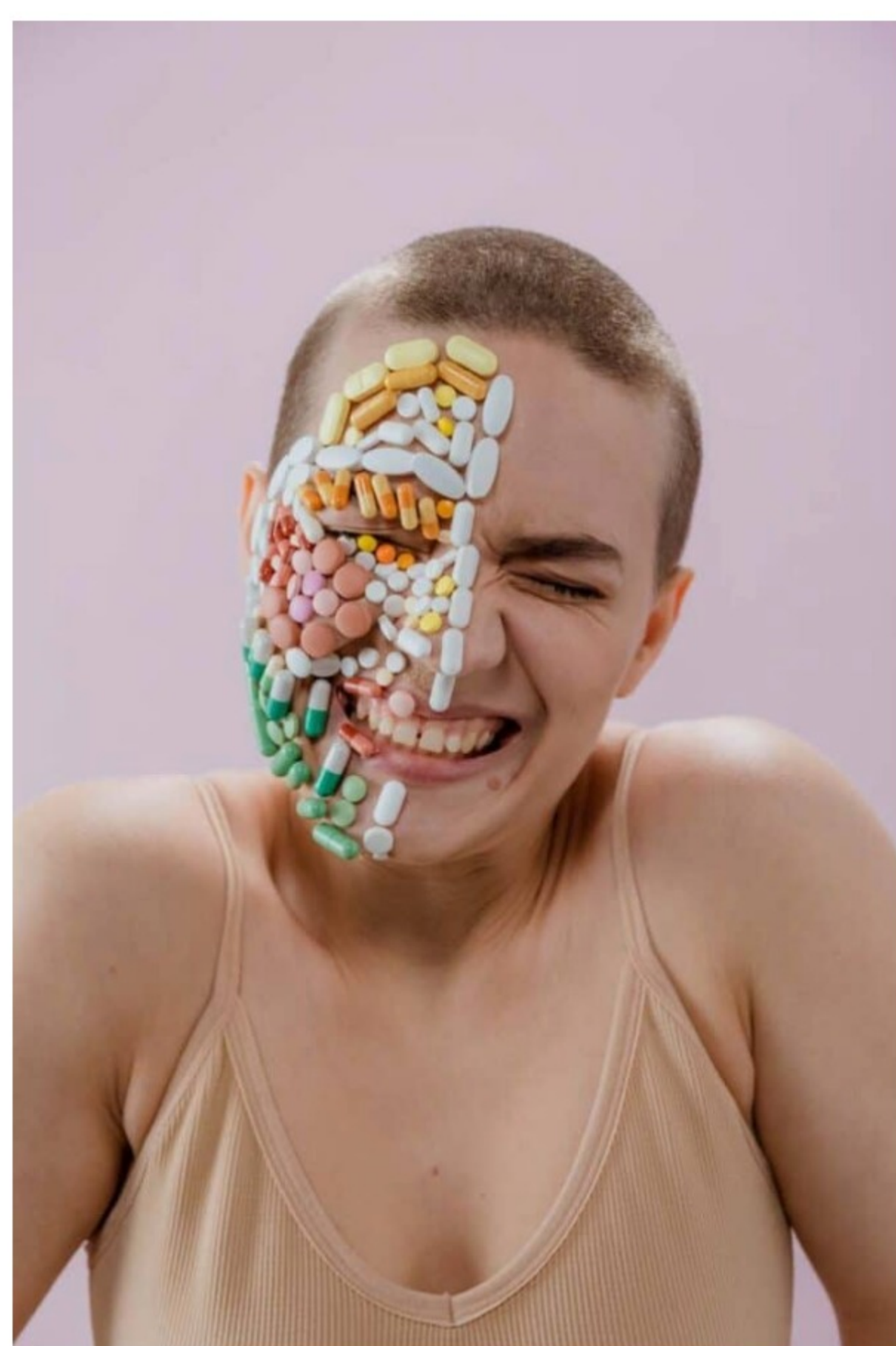
Opioid agonists, such as methadone and buprenorphine, help people stay in treatment and minimize illicit drug usage by alleviating withdrawal symptoms and cravings. These drugs have saved lives in the past, but their use is limited and there aren't enough doctors who can prescribe them. This makes it hard to get them. This is why the best treatment is to get help at a rehab center.

Why Treatment For Fentanyl Addiction Is Necessary

One of the first steps in overcoming an opioid addiction is realizing that you have a problem. Addiction is a chronic medical illness caused by the intricate interplay of neural circuits in the brain, heredity, the environment, and one's own experiences. People who are addicted to drugs use them out of control and keep doing it even though it hurts them.

When you take opioids for a long time, your body gets used to them, and you become dependent on them. Tolerance to fentanyl means that you have to take more of the drug to get the same effect, whether you want to get high or feel less pain.

As you keep taking the same amount of the drug, you become less sensitive to how it makes you feel; this is how addiction starts – you need more and more of the drug as time goes on, and going without seems impossible. Finding the right addiction treatment is crucial if you want to get your life back. If you know you have a problem, now is the right time to ask for help.


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