



HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS



Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration

COUNTERFEIT PILLS FACT SHEET

FAKE PRESCRIPTION PILLS • WIDELY AVAILABLE • INCREASINGLY LETHAL

CRIMINAL DRUG NETWORKS ARE FLOODING THE U.S. WITH DEADLY FAKE PILLS

- Criminal drug networks are mass-producing fake pills and falsely marketing them as legitimate prescription pills to deceive the American public.
- Counterfeit pills are easy to purchase, widely available, often contain fentanyl or methamphetamine, and can be deadly.
- 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 teens and young adults.
- Many counterfeit pills are made to look like prescription opioids such as oxycodone (Oxycontin®, Percocet®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), and alprazolam (Xanax®); or stimulants like amphetamines (Adderall®).



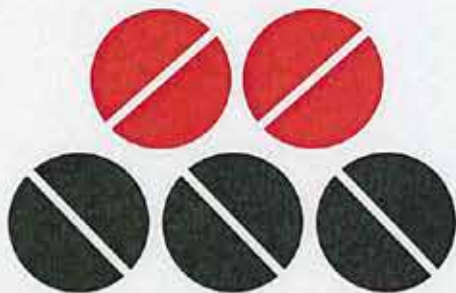
Authentic oxycodone M30 tablets



*Counterfeit oxycodone M30 tablets containing fentanyl

COUNTERFEIT PILLS OFTEN CONTAIN FENTANYL AND ARE MORE LETHAL THAN EVER BEFORE

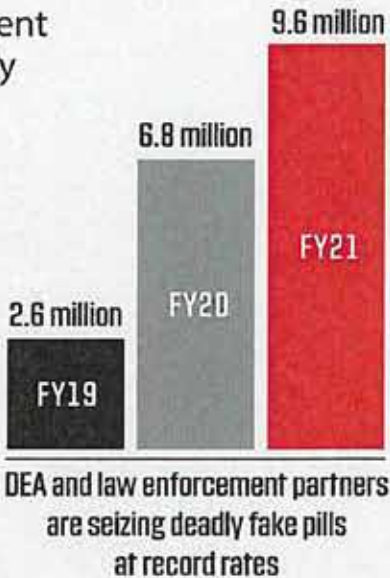
- The number of DEA-seized counterfeit pills with fentanyl has jumped nearly 430 percent since 2019.
- Officials report a dramatic rise in the number of counterfeit pills containing at least 2 mg of fentanyl, which is considered a deadly dose.
- Drug traffickers are using fake pills to exploit the opioid crisis and prescription drug misuse. CDC reports more than 93,000 people died last year of an overdose in the U.S., the highest ever recorded.
- Fentanyl, the synthetic opioid most commonly found in counterfeit pills, is the primary driver in this alarming increase in overdose deaths.



**DEA lab testing reveals that
2 out of every 5 pills with fentanyl
contain a potentially lethal dose.**

COUNTERFEIT PILLS ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE ACROSS EVERY STATE IN THE COUNTRY

- DEA and its law enforcement partners are seizing deadly fake pills at record rates.
- More than 9.5 million counterfeit pills were seized so far this year, which is more than the last two years combined.
- Counterfeit pills have been identified in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.



- Drug trafficking is also inextricably linked with violence.
- This year alone, DEA seized more than 2,700 firearms in connection with drug trafficking investigations—a 30 percent increase since 2019.

THE ONLY SAFE MEDICATIONS ARE ONES THAT COME FROM LICENSED AND ACCREDITED MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

- DEA warns that pills purchased outside of a licensed pharmacy are illegal, dangerous, and potentially lethal.



For more information about counterfeit pills, go to www.DEA.gov/onepill

Data as of September 2021

The Drug Enforcement Administration ensures the safety and health of the American public by fighting against violent criminal drug networks and foreign cartels trafficking in illicit drugs. To accomplish that mission, the Drug Enforcement Administration employs approximately 10,000 men and women throughout the world – Special Agents, diversion investigators, intelligence analysts, and chemists – across 239 domestic offices in 23 U.S. divisions and 91 foreign offices in 68 countries.