

Fentanyl, Xylazine, and Fentanyl Analogs Found in “Percocet” Drug Sample Testing in Rhode Island



testRI is a two-year study to find out what is in the drug supply in Rhode Island and how changes to the supply are impacting people who use drugs in our community. We are testing used equipment, like pipes and syringes, that are collected from the community or donated by individuals or local organizations. Samples are tested using advanced confirmatory toxicology testing (LC-QTOF-MS).

Data from all samples tested in the study can be found on testri.org.

*Samples we have collected and tested only represent a small part of the local drug supply in Rhode Island and may not represent the broader drug supply in the state. Samples are also not being tested in relation to overdose so outcomes from use, like overdose, are unknown.

Background:

In September 2022, we tested five drug samples sold as “Percocet” pills. All five samples contained both fentanyl and xylazine.

Fentanyl was a major component in all 5 samples and xylazine was a major component in 3 out of the 5 samples.

Fentanyl analogs (e.g., acrylfentanyl, para-fluorofentanyl) were also found in 4 of 5 samples, and oxycodone was found in only one of the samples tested.

Counterfeit pills, like “percocets,” are fake products manufactured illegally using pill press machines.

Counterfeit pills are designed to look like prescription pills, but may contain fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, or other active cuts such as xylazine.

Non-prescribed fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, and other novel psychoactives substances are increasingly being found in counterfeit pills across the United States.

Health Effects:

Counterfeit pills frequently contain potentially lethal amounts of fentanyl.

Naloxone will work to reverse opioid overdose effects from fentanyl, fentanyl analogs and other opioids. Naloxone has not been documented to reverse the effects of xylazine

The mixing of drugs with or without the knowledge of people who are using drugs creates higher risk for overdose.



Why does this matter?

Because the drug supply is always changing, it can be hard to know what you are buying. Testing your drugs first with fentanyl test strips can be a good first step.

Having naloxone (Narcan) with you is always important so you can respond to an overdose. It is also important to try not to use alone so someone can help you if you experience an overdose.

Start low and go slow. Using a little bit of your drug at a time can be helpful to test the strength and keep track of your doses.

Never trust yourself to determine if a purchased or shared pill is legitimate. The best way to avoid counterfeit medications is to take only medications prescribed by a licensed health care professional and dispensed by a registered pharmacist.