

Name _____

Understanding Fentanyl and Its Dangers

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that was originally developed for medical use. It is not derived from natural sources like the opium poppy but is made in a laboratory. Fentanyl was initially intended for use as a painkiller and anesthetic in medical settings, primarily during surgery or to manage severe pain, such as that experienced by cancer patients.
2. Fentanyl is extremely dangerous for several reasons. First, it is exceptionally potent, estimated to be 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin. Its potency increases the risk of overdose. Second, fentanyl is available on the illicit drug market, where it may be sold as a white powder or mixed with other drugs, often without the user's knowledge. This makes it particularly dangerous, as people may unknowingly consume fentanyl when they think they are using a different substance. Third, fentanyl overdoses can be challenging to reverse with standard opioid overdose reversal



Name _____

medications like naloxone, and multiple doses of naloxone may be required.

3. Carrying naloxone is crucial because it can rapidly reverse opioid overdoses, potentially saving lives. Individuals at risk of opioid overdose, including those prescribed opioids for pain, should consider carrying naloxone to ensure they or someone nearby can respond quickly in the event of an overdose. Seeking treatment is also essential for individuals struggling with substance misuse or addiction.
4. Education and awareness about the dangers of fentanyl are vital for communities and individuals. Increasing awareness can help prevent accidental exposure to fentanyl and save lives by providing information about the risks, signs of overdose, and the importance of seeking help or carrying naloxone. Educational initiatives, community outreach programs, and healthcare providers play important roles in raising awareness and educating the public about the dangers of fentanyl.

