



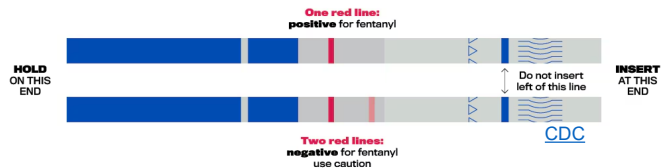
Polysubstance Use: Fentanyl + Methamphetamine

Polysubstance use is the intentional or unintentional use of more than one drug (including prescription drugs) taken together or within a short time. The risk of overdose, death, and other negative health outcomes is higher with polysubstance use as opposed to using only one substance ([Molecular Psychiatry, 2020](#)). Nationally, overdose deaths from co-use of methamphetamine and fentanyl have been on the rise ([JAMA Psychiatry, 2024](#)).

Interventions can be more effective when expanded beyond single drug use. For example, supplies such as naloxone or fentanyl test strips are helpful for people who use meth or other stimulants because they may, intentionally or unintentionally, also use opioids.

Almost half of drug overdose deaths in 2022 involved multiple drugs; testing helps people make safer and more informed decisions about drug use ([CDC, Harm Reduction J., 2019](#)).

Drug testing identifies different substances in a sample and can better inform people about the current drug supply and influence safer decisions for current or potential users. Drug testing is legal in Washington and test strips are not considered paraphernalia. Test strip example below.



Why do people use opioids & stimulants together?

It's reported that they feel that the combination can help avoid opioid overdose, minimize withdrawal symptoms, and balance or enhance the effects of the other drug. However, it can increase the risk of overdose and death ([Front Neurosci. 2020](#), Harm Reduction Journal, 2024 [Frederickson & Mars](#)).

Resources:

- Find information or access test strips:
- Sound Pathways (soundpathways.org, 425-259-7142), or online at dancesafe.org or dosetest.com
 - <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/fentanyl-test-strip-training-video>

From 2022-2023, deaths from methamphetamine combined with synthetic opioids like fentanyl account for about 35% of all fatal drug poisonings in Washington State residents who died in Washington. Methamphetamine combined with heroin accounts for about 3% of deaths and methamphetamine combined with other common opioids account for about 2% ([ADAI](#)). Deaths from a single drug in the table below are shown on the diagonal. For example, synthetic opioids alone accounted for 17.3% of fatal drug poisonings.

Percent of fatal drug poisonings by drug pairs, 2022-2023

Methadone	2.0%	1.8%	0.5%	0.4%	0.6%	0.5%
Cocaine	11.7%	5.7%	0.6%	0.7%	1.8%	0.6%
Heroin	2.3%	2.8%	0.6%	0.3%	0.7%	0.4%
Other common opioids	4.0%	2.1%	1.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%
Methamphetamine	35.4%	14.6%	2.1%	2.7%	5.7%	1.8%
Other synthetic opioids (including fentanyl)	17.3%	35.4%	4.0%	2.3%	11.7%	2.0%
	Other synthetic opioids (including fentanyl)	Methamphetamine	Other common opioids	Heroin	Cocaine	Methadone

*Analysis by UW ADAI, adapted by Snohomish Health Dept. For data sources, see adai.uw.edu/WAdata. Not all drugs are listed & 2023 data are preliminary.

For more information and resources, visit snohomishoverdoseprevention.com