



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

Carfentanil Identified in Rapid Analysis of Drugs Samples

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Summary Points:

- Carfentanil was found in three Rapid Analysis of Drug (RAD) samples collected between 8/4/2025 and 8/6/2025 in Baltimore City and Cecil County.
- Maryland fatal overdose data has identified carfentanil in 34 overdose deaths in eight jurisdictions from January through July 2025.¹
- Carfentanil is 100 times more potent than fentanyl, meaning using even very small doses of the substance can lead to an overdose. Naloxone works against carfentanil.
- The risk of overdose death can be reduced by utilizing harm reduction strategies including always carrying naloxone, using fentanyl test strips, having substances tested at local syringe service programs, giving rescue breaths for all overdoses, and avoiding using illicit substances alone.

Carfentanil is a synthetic opioid frequently used in veterinary medicine as a tranquilizer for large animals with no therapeutic use for humans. Carfentanil is 100 times more potent than fentanyl, which means that using very small doses of the substance can lead to an overdose. **[Naloxone](#) remains effective in reversing the effects of carfentanil and should be used whenever an overdose is suspected.**

Data from the [Maryland Rapid Analysis of Drugs](#) program, the statewide drug checking program located in [syringe service programs](#), has identified carfentanil in three samples collected between 8/4/2025 and 8/6/2025. Two samples were collected in Baltimore City and one sample was collected in Cecil County. These are the first RAD samples to have identified carfentanil in Maryland, previously only seen in Maryland's fatal overdose data. In all three cases, carfentanil made up less than 2% of the sample. Due to the high potency of carfentanil, its presence at any level is concerning. All three samples included a number of other substances in addition to carfentanil.

¹ The fatal overdose data from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and Vital Statistics Administration is preliminary and subject to change.

² This compound made up less than 2% of the sample.

Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3
Caffeine	Caffeine	Ethyl 4-ANPP
Cocaine	Mannitol	Fentanyl
Mannitol	Medetomidine	Lidocaine
Medetomidine	Procaine	Medetomidine
Methamphetamine	Quinine	Procaine
Procaine	BTMPS ²	Tetracaine
Quinine	Carfentanil²	Xylazine
BTMPS ²	Fentanyl ²	4-ANPP ²
Carfentanil²		Carfentanil²
Fentanyl ²		
Lidocaine ²		

The Maryland Department of Health Office of the Chief Medical Examiner has identified carfentanil as a substance found in the toxicology reports of 16 decedents in 2024 and 34 decedents through July, 30th, 2025. In all cases, carfentanil was found in combination with fentanyl and other fentanyl analogues. The majority of these cases occurred in Baltimore City. So far in 2025, carfentanil has been identified in deaths in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Frederick County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Washington County, and Wicomico County based on Vital Statistics Data (VSA).¹

While the overall incidence of carfentanil found in the illicit drug supply remains low, the identification of the substance demonstrates the ever changing nature of the illicit drug supply. People who are using drugs should connect with [local harm reduction services](#) within their community to gain access to services and strategies to reduce their risk. Providers can discuss the volatility of the illicit drug supply, encourage safer use practices, and ask patients with substance use disorder and history of substance use about their openness to treatment.

Safer use practices can include:

- Carry naloxone and [know how to use naloxone](#) to respond to an overdose you may witness. Give rescue breaths for all overdoses. Free naloxone is available at over 296 Overdose Response Programs (ORP) throughout Maryland. [Find a location near you.](#)
- Test your drugs with test strips (available at most ORPs), or go to a [local syringe service program](#) which participates in the Rapid Analysis of Drugs program to get

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samples tested.

- Try not to use it alone. If you are able and comfortable around someone else, make sure [naloxone](#) is available.
- Go slow: try a smaller amount of their drug to see how it feels before using your normal dose.
- Speak with your community to see if certain drugs are causing adverse events for people who use substances. Let people know when you experience an adverse event.

SAVE A LIFE WITH NALOXONE

WHAT IS NALOXONE?

Naloxone is a prescription medicine that safely and effectively reverses an opioid overdose. Doctors and paramedics have used it for decades. Naloxone is sprayed up the nose.

OPIOID OVERDOSE RESPONSE STEPS

Recognize the Signs of an Opioid Overdose

- Loud snoring
- Lips or fingertips turning blue
- Pale/grayish skin
- Unresponsiveness
- A very limp body
- Shallow, slow, or stopped breathing
- Slow or stopped heartbeat

Know Your Rights
Maryland's Good Samaritan Law protects people assisting in an emergency overdose situation from arrest, as well as prosecution, for certain crimes.

STEP 1: GET THEIR ATTENTION



Firmly rub your knuckles up and down the middle of the person's chest.

STEP 2: CALL 911



Tell them your location and the person's symptoms.

STEP 3: GIVE NALOXONE



1. Peel back the package to remove the device.
2. Place tip of nozzle in either nostril until your fingers touch the bottom of the person's nose.
3. Press the plunger firmly to release dose into nose.
4. Give second dose if first dose does not work within 1-3 minutes.

STEP 4: SUPPORT BREATHING



1. Lay the person on their back.
2. Tilt the chin back. Remove anything blocking airway.
3. Pinch the person's nose closed and cover their mouth with your mouth.
4. Blow 2 regular breaths, then give 1 breath every 5 seconds.
5. Do chest compressions if trained in CPR.

STEP 5: CARE FOR THE PERSON



Stay with the person until medical help arrives.

Place the person in recovery position: face and head turned to the side, top hand placed under head, and top knee bent to support the body.



USED YOUR NALOXONE? LET US KNOW!
Scan to report naloxone use.

StopOverdose.Maryland.gov
MD Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988

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