

# ALERT!

## Gray Death



**G**ray Death is a relatively new street drug made from a mixture of various opioids. Its name is derived from its lethality (it can be deadly even in very small doses) and from its color. The drug has a gray, powdery appearance similar to concrete mixing powder. Users smoke, eat, inject or snort it. Nationwide, Gray Death is responsible for thousands of overdoses and deaths. It has most often been found in the southern United States and in the Midwest.

Gray Death is one of the latest concoctions to emerge from the dangerous trend of recent years in which heroin is mixed with other substances. The mixtures are much more potent than heroin alone. Analysis of Gray Death samples have found that it most often contains varying amounts of heroin, fentanyl, carfentanil, 3-methylfentanyl and the synthetic designer opioid known as U-47700. The DEA has categorized U-47700 as a Schedule 1 drug, considering it among the most dangerous drugs that it regulates. U-47700 by itself has been responsible for many fatalities; the same could be said for each of Gray Death's other ingredients. Each ingredient alone is potentially deadly, when combined they are unpredictable and even more deadly.

Law enforcement has called Gray Death one of the scariest combinations of drugs ever to hit the streets. Different batches of the drug have different

ingredients in varying amounts and investigators aren't always sure exactly what they are dealing with. This is another reason why Gray Death—like all street drugs—is very risky for the user. A drug addict buys a substance assuming they are getting a certain drug. For example, a heroin addict might buy Gray Death thinking it is pure heroin and end up overdosing on it. There is no way for a user to know exactly which substances are contained in drugs bought on the street. There is no consistency in potency from one batch to the next. Users of illegal drugs put their lives at risk every time they get high.

The components of Gray Death are so powerful that merely touching them or breathing them in can be deadly. Contact with Gray Death can quickly become fatal. First responders and law enforcement officers have been advised to use extreme caution around opioids and opioid mixtures like Gray Death. Gloves and other protective equipment are worn when confiscating and handling these drugs. Even gloves may not be enough, however. According to one report an officer in the Midwest accidentally overdosed when he touched Gray Death during an arrest. Lab investigators must also take precautions. They wear lab coats, goggles, masks and gloves when handling Gray Death and similar drugs. They also use the buddy system to help ensure safety.

The effects of Gray Death include: nausea, dizziness, clammy skin, lethargy, pinpoint pupils, shallow breathing, unconsciousness, heart failure, respiratory failure and death. Naloxone (aka Narcan) is the drug first responders and medical personnel administer to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Counteracting a typical heroin overdose usually requires a single dose of Naloxone. But to reverse a Gray Death overdose it takes multiple doses of Naloxone—up to ten times the amount it takes for heroin. If you come across an unknown substance that you suspect is a drug, stay away from it and contact the appropriate authorities. 🚓

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