

Canada says it will restrict fentanyl chemicals

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Canada plans to restrict six chemicals used to make the drug fentanyl in a bid to stem what it called a national opioid crisis, the Canadian health minister said Wednesday.

The substances—which are currently unregulated and profitable for the illicit drug market—will be added to the list of illegal drugs that includes cocaine and heroin.

Health Canada, the national [health](#) department, said [fentanyl](#) misuse began growing with pharmaceutical forms of the [drug](#), but in recent months domestic production of illicit fentanyl has emerged.

"Health Canada regularly monitors the emergence of new substances onto the [illicit drug](#) market and works closely with law enforcement to address them as quickly and efficiently as possible," said Health Minister Jane Philpot.

Importing or exporting the chemicals to and from Canada will become illegal, unless specifically authorized to produce the medication fentanyl, a powerful sedative up to 100 times more potent than morphine.

Pop legend Prince, who died of an accidental overdose of fentanyl in April, is the latest high-profile victim of the addictive and often-counterfeit pills.

Reported cases of fatal fentanyl overdoses has exploded in recent

months particularly in the provinces of British Columbia and Ontario.

Last month British Columbia's Premier Christy Clark called the situation "alarming, frightening," noting that the province recorded 371 fentanyl overdose deaths from January to June, a 74 percent jump.

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