

# DOJ asks congress to permanently classify fentanyl-like drugs

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(HealthDay)—A temporary order classifying fentanyl-like drugs as

controlled substances should be enacted into law, the U.S. Department of Justice is telling Congress.

The order—which was enacted in 2018 on an emergency basis and expires in February 2020—tightened controls on fentanyl-like drugs, which had skirted federal law because their chemical makeup is slightly different than the opioid fentanyl, which is about 100 times stronger than morphine, *CBS News* reported. Fentanyl-like drugs can be even stronger.

"From a policy and regulatory perspective, fentanyl-like substances need to be permanently scheduled as a class," said Katie Crytzer, the acting deputy assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Policy at the Department of Justice, *CBS News* reported. The [classification](#) is an "urgent and necessary first step," she told reporters Monday.

Of the more than 70,000 [drug overdose deaths](#) in the U.S. in 2017, nearly 48,000 were caused by opioids, and about 29,000 by fentanyl or fentanyl-like [substances](#), according to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data, said John Martin, assistant administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, *CBS News* reported.

**More information:** [CBS News Article](#)

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