

US travelers warned about counterfeit pills containing fentanyl in Mexican pharmacies

March 20 2023, by Cara Murez



Traveling in Mexico? Use caution when buying medications there,

cautions the U.S. State Department.

The [warning](#) was issued in response to concerns about counterfeit [pills](#) containing fentanyl being sold at pharmacies in tourist areas and border regions.

"Counterfeit pills are readily advertised on [social media](#) and can be purchased at small, non-chain pharmacies in Mexico along the border and in tourist areas," it said.

Pills sold as OxyContin, Percocet and Xanax are often counterfeit and "may contain deadly doses of fentanyl," the State Department advised.

Among the [towns](#) where this may be happening are beach resort locations, such as Playa del Carmen and Tulum, the Associated Press reported.

"The U.S. Department of State has no higher priority than the safety and security of U.S. citizens overseas. We take seriously our commitment to provide U.S. citizens with clear, timely, and reliable information about every country in the world so they can make informed travel decisions," the agency told the AP.

UCLA researchers published a preprint [study](#) in January after visiting four northern Mexico cities.

Researchers found 68% of 40 Mexican pharmacies sold Oxycodone, Xanax or Adderall. About 27% of those pharmacies sold fake pills.

"Brick and mortar pharmacies in Northern Mexican [tourist](#) towns are selling counterfeit pills containing fentanyl, heroin and methamphetamine. These pills are sold mainly to U.S. tourists, and are often passed off as controlled substances such as Oxycodone, Percocet

and Adderall," according to the study.

"These counterfeit pills represent a serious overdose risk to buyers who think they are getting a known quantity of a weaker drug," study author Chelsea Shover, an assistant professor-in-residence of medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, told the AP.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has [more](#) on fentanyl.

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