

# After U.S. warns of counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl, Mexico shuts down 23 pharmacies

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Following a four-day raid, Mexico has closed 23 pharmacies in Caribbean resorts of Cancun, Playa del Carmen, and Tulum for irregular pill sales.

Last spring, the United States [warned](#) of dangerous pill sales to foreigners and tourists where [counterfeit drugs](#) contained [fentanyl](#), heroin, and methamphetamine. Mexican investigators went to 55 drug stores, finding irregular sales at 23 of them, according to the Mexican Navy Department.

In a [study](#) from researchers at the University of California in Los Angeles, the scientists said they visited 40 pharmacies in four Northern Mexico cities, finding that 68 percent sold oxycodone, Xanax, or Adderall. About 27 percent of those pharmacies were selling fake pills, according to the report, which said "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."

In the raids, the Navy said it found outdated medications and those with no supplier record, the *Associated Press* reported. Also found were blank and unsigned prescription forms. The Navy did not confirm finding fentanyl-laced pills, but it did say that the medications would be tested for the presence of fentanyl.

Fentanyl is responsible for about 70,000 deaths each year in the United States, the *AP* reported, noting that Mexican cartels produce it from chemicals smuggled in from China.

"These counterfeit pills represent a serious overdose risk to buyers who think they are getting a known quantity of a weaker drug," researcher Chelsea Shover, Ph.D., an assistant professor-in-residence of medicine

at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, told the *AP* in February.

**More information:** [Associated Press Article](#)

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