Cychlorphine: new potent synthetic opioid

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About SAPC

- The Department of Public Health's Bureau of Substance Abuse Prevention and Control (DPH-SAPC) oversees the most diverse and comprehensive continuum of SUD services in California.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICE HELPLINE
24/7
1.844.804.7500

CENS
Client Engagement and Navigation Services

CET
Community Engagement Team

- SAPC is committed to innovative, equitable, and quality-focused substance use **Prevention**, **Harm Reduction**, **Treatment**, and **Recovery Services**.

DPH-SAPC Contracted Provider Network*

PREVENTION
- **29** provider agencies
- **133** site locations
- **148,324** served

HARM REDUCTION
- **16** provider agencies
- **100** site locations
- **200,000** served

TREATMENT AND RECOVERY
- **80** provider agencies
- **254** site locations
- **33,800** served

Recovery Housing
- **27** provider agencies
- **170** site locations
- **4,752** served

*For persons served, all numbers are annual

SAPC Website: ph.lacounty.gov/sapc/ | SAPC Strategic Plan - 2023-2028: ph.lacounty.gov/sapc/docs/providers/SAPC-Strategic-Plan-2023-2028.pdf

07APR2026

LAHAN
Los Angeles County Health Alert Network

LAC DPH Health Alert: Fatal Overdose Associated with Cychlorphine in Los Angeles County

October 15, 2026

County of Los Angeles Public Health

NEWS RELEASE

County of Los Angeles Public Health

313 N. Figueroa Street, Room 806 | Los Angeles, CA 90012 | (213) 288-8144 |
media@ph.lacounty.gov

For Immediate Release:

October 15, 2026

First Fatal Overdose Tied to Potent Opioid Cychlorphine Reported in Los Angeles County

Cychlorphine

(N-propionitrile Chlorphine)

WHAT IS CYCHLORPHINE?

Cychlorphine is a highly potent and potentially deadly synthetic opioid.



DEA seizures of cychlorphine pills



Cychlorphine appears on the illicit market:

- Pure
- Mixed with other drugs like fentanyl and cocaine
- Pressed into counterfeit prescription pills

HIGHLY POTENT



More potent than fentanyl

HARD TO DETECT



Standard fentanyl test strips will NOT detect cychlorphine.

OVERDOSE REVERSAL



Overdoses may require multiple doses of naloxone (Narcan®)

CYCHLORPHINE HAS NO MEDICAL USE

DEA, Oct 2026

Summary

- **Cychlorphine** is a very strong synthetic opioid, stronger than fentanyl
- **Naloxone reverses a cychlorphine overdose if given in time; multiple doses may be needed.**
- **Cychlorphine** belongs to a group of drugs called **orphines**, which were first created in a pharmaceutical laboratory in the 1960s.
- First detected in the U.S. in 2024.
- Banned federally on an emergency basis in August 2026.
- Found in California and at least 24 other states.
- Linked to more than 140 deaths in the U.S. and Canada, including one in LA County.

Pharmacology

- Cychlorphine: potent activator of μ-opioid receptor
  - Overdose caused by respiratory suppression.
  - Naloxone reverses; multiple doses may be needed
- Potency: estimated ~10x fentanyl in lab studies; human data limited
- Increased risk of fatal respiratory arrest at small doses
- Not detected on routine drug testing – requires laboratory testing

SAPC About Prevention Treatment Recovery Harm Reduction Providers 24/7

Facts About Substances in LA

SAPC Home / Public / Facts About Substances in LA

EMERGING SUBSTANCES in Los Angeles County

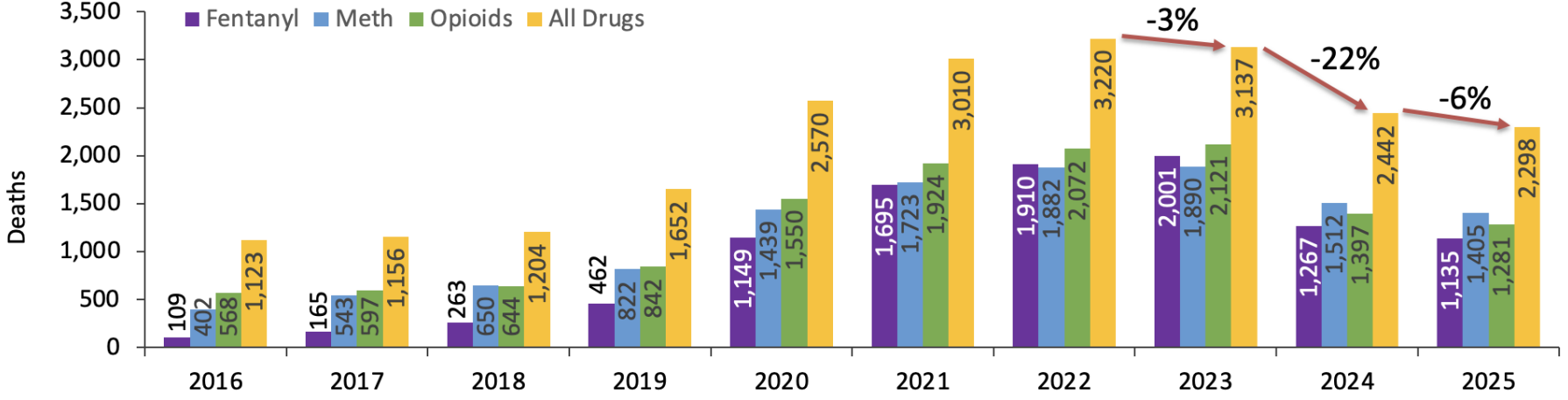




Public Health Risks

- High overdose risk among people using counterfeit pills or using multiple types of substances.
- Overdose risk increased by:
  - Use alongside sedatives or stimulants
  - Variable potency across batches
- Public health interventions include harm reduction services, naloxone distribution, drug checking services, availability of medications for opioid use disorder and treatment services

Continued Decline in Drug Overdose Deaths in LA County



- **3 consecutive years of decreases in drug overdose deaths**
- **Nearly 30% overall decrease in drug overdose deaths from 2022 to 2025**

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Stopping Overdose Deaths

If you or someone you know are going to use illicit drugs, please remember the following:

- Do not use alone. Use with a friend or someone who can call 911 and administer naloxone in the event of an overdose. If you are alone, call Never Use Alone at 1-800-484-3731.
- Start low and go slow: a very tiny amount of cychlorphine can cause someone to immediately stop breathing.
- Do not mix drugs. Using opioids together with alcohol, sedatives, or sleeping medications sharply increases the risk of overdose.
- In an overdose, administer naloxone and call 911. Multiple doses may be necessary.

Recover LA Mobile App



- Free mobile app
- Provides education and resources for those seeking substance use services for themselves or others
- Available in 13 languages
- RecoverLA.org

QR code can be used to access the app as well



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References

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- White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Drug Threat Notice: Cychlorphine (April 30, 2026).
  - https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Drug-Threat-Cychlorohine-justified-1-1.pdf
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- LA County Public Health Cychlorphine Fact Sheet
  - http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/docs/prevention/FactSheet/Cychlorphine%20Factsheet.pdf
- LA County Public Health reports on fentanyl and overdose trends
  - http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/sapc/public/data-reports-and-briefs.html
- DEA, Emerging Drug Threats website
  - https://www.dea.gov/resources/emerging-drug-trends



Questions?

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