

Edward P. Mangano
County Executive



Victor F. Politi
Acting Police Commissioner

**The Nassau County Police Department is sending this out on behalf of the Nassau County
Medical Examiner**

MEDIA ADVISORY

**OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER
COUNTY OF NASSAU**

TAMARA BLOOM, M.D.
CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER

JOSEPH AVELLA, Ph.D.
CHIEF TOXICOLOGIST



2251 HEMPSTEAD TPKE, Bldg "R"
EAST MEADOW, NY 11554-1856
516-572-6400
FAX 516-572-5174

January 31, 2014

CONTAMINATED HEROIN ALERT



The Nassau County Medical Examiner's Office is investigating several deaths initially assumed to be linked to the abuse of heroin, but in fact were found to have involved the potent narcotic fentanyl. Evidence associated with two of these cases has been analyzed by the Forensic Toxicology Laboratory and has been determined to contain fentanyl in combination with the banned antipyretic metamizole. Specifically these glassine packets are stamped as "24K" in red ink.

Fentanyl is a synthetic narcotic analgesic of extremely high potency. Fentanyl is approximately 100 times more potent than morphine, the active ingredient of heroin. Clinically fentanyl is used for the treatment of severe pain or for the induction of anesthesia. Severe respiratory depression may occur with the use of fentanyl. Metamizole is an analgesic and antipyretic that is similar in use to ibuprofen. Metamizole has been banned for use in the US since 1977 due to the potential for the development of agranulocytosis.

The Nassau County Medical Examiner is reporting that glassine packets marked as "24K" that is presumably being distributed as heroin, in fact contains the extremely potent narcotic analgesic fentanyl. The Nassau County Medical Examiner is disseminating this information for situational awareness purposes only.