**CDC looks at four categories of opioids:**

1. **Natural opioid analgesics,**including morphine and codeine, and **semi-synthetic opioid analgesics,**including drugs such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, hydromorphone, and oxymorphone;
2. **Methadone,**a synthetic opioid;
3. **Synthetic opioidanalgesics**other than methadone, including drugs such as tramadol and fentanyl; and
4. **Heroin,**an illicit (illegally-made) opioid synthesized from morphine that can be a white or brown powder, or a black sticky substance.

Regardless of the analysis strategy used, prescription opioids continue to be involved in more overdose deaths than any other drug, and all the numbers are likely to underestimate the true burden given the large proportion of overdose deaths where the type of drug is not listed on the death certificate. The findings show that two distinct but interconnected trends are driving America’s opioid overdose epidemic: a 15-year increase in deaths from prescription opioid overdoses, and a recent surge in illicit opioid overdoses driven mainly by heroin and illegally-made fentanyl. Both of these trends continued in 2015.

