

Xylazine: What you need to know!

What is it?

Xylazine is a non-opioid veterinary tranquilizer not approved for human use and has been linked to an increasing number of overdose deaths nationwide in the evolving drug addiction and overdose crisis. Studies show people exposed to xylazine often knowingly or unknowingly used it in combination with other drugs, particularly illicit fentanyl in order to lengthen its euphoric effects. People report using xylazine or xylazine-containing drugs by injecting, snorting, swallowing, or inhaling.

Also known as “Tranq,” xylazine is a central nervous system depressant that can cause drowsiness, amnesia, and slow the user’s breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure down to dangerously low levels.



Source: Smithsonian Magazine

Alarming Statistics

The NIH (National Institute on Drug Abuse) reports that while the full national scope of overdose deaths involving xylazine is unknown, research shows overdose deaths linked to xylazine have spread westward across the United States, with the largest impact in the Northeast.

Most overdose deaths linked to both xylazine and fentanyl also involved additional substances, including cocaine, heroin, benzodiazepines, alcohol, gabapentin, methadone, and prescription opioids. From 2015 to 2020, the percentage of all drug overdose deaths involving xylazine increased from 2% to 26% in Pennsylvania. Xylazine was involved in 19% of all drug overdose deaths in Maryland in 2021 and 10% in Connecticut in 2020.

According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), 107,735 Americans died between August 2021 and August 2022 from drug poisonings, with 66 percent of those deaths involving synthetic opioids like fentanyl. The Sinaloa Cartel and Jalisco Cartel in Mexico, using chemicals largely sourced from China, are primarily responsible for the vast majority of the fentanyl that is being trafficked in communities across the United States.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is reporting a widespread increase in the trafficking of fentanyl mixed with xylazine.

“Xylazine is making the deadliest drug threat our country has ever faced, fentanyl, even deadlier,” said Administrator Milgram. “DEA has seized xylazine and fentanyl mixtures in 48 of 50 States. The DEA Laboratory System is reporting that in 2022 approximately 23% of fentanyl powder and 7% of fentanyl pills seized by the DEA contained xylazine.”

Overdose – Narcan - Necrosis

Xylazine and fentanyl drug mixtures place users at a higher risk of suffering a fatal drug poisoning. Taking opioids in combination with other central nervous system depressants—like alcohol or benzodiazepines—increases the risk of life-threatening overdose as well.

Because xylazine is not an opioid, Naloxone (Narcan) does not reverse its effects.

In the event of a suspected xylazine overdose, experts recommend giving the opioid overdose reversal medication naloxone because xylazine is frequently combined with opioids. However, naloxone does not address the impact of xylazine on breathing.

Because of this, experts are concerned that a growing prevalence of xylazine in the illicit opioid supply may render naloxone less effective for some overdoses. Emergency medical services should always be alerted to a suspected overdose.

People who repeatedly inject drug mixtures containing xylazine are prone to develop skin ulcers, abscesses, severe wounds, including necrosis—the rotting of human tissue—that may lead to amputation.

Many users go untreated rather than face judgment at hospitals and other treatment centers.



Source: Pennsylvania Capital Star

Where is the Hope? What can we do?

This drug is making its way from the big cities and right into the suburbs, as it knows no boundaries. It is deadly, and for people who crave that lengthened state of euphoria, it is attractive and worth the risk... They are caught in the grip of addiction!

As people of God, we must continue to educate ourselves in order to be better prepared to answer the tough questions, know where to get assistance, and above all show God's love and compassion for all.

Pray for God to intervene in the lives of drug users... Pray for the resources to flow to officials as they need to combat this deadly invasion.... and Pray that our hearts and minds remain open to sharing His abundant and everlasting love with all we meet.

Article Sources: NIH National Institute on Drug Abuse / Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) / 6ABC