

Public Safety Alert: Xylazine

“Xylazine is making the deadliest drug threat our country has ever faced, fentanyl, even deadlier,” said (Drug Enforcement Agency) Administrator Anne 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!”

WHAT IS XYLAZINE?

- Xylazine is a non-opioid, pain reliever, and muscle relaxant that the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) originally approved in 1972 as a sedative and analgesic for use in veterinary medicine².
- While not intended for use in humans, drug traffickers have been mixing xylazine with other drugs like fentanyl to enhance their effects.
- Trade and other names for xylazine are Rompun®, Sedazine® and AnaSed®.
- Street names include “tranq,” “tranq dope,” or “zombie drug.”
- Xylazine can be purchased on the Internet in liquid and powder form, often with no association to the veterinary profession nor requirements to prove legitimate need.

WHAT IS THE CONCERN ABOUT XYLAZINE?

- Xylazine and fentanyl drug mixtures place users at a higher risk of suffering fatal drug poisoning.
- Because xylazine is not an opioid, naloxone does not reverse its effects. Still, experts always recommend administering naloxone if someone might be suffering drug poisoning¹.
- People who inject drug mixtures containing xylazine can also develop skin and soft tissue wounds, including necrosis—the rotting of human tissue—that may lead to amputation¹.
- It produces a state of sedation and can cause drowsiness, amnesia and slow breathing.
- Xylazine is cut or mixed into drugs like heroin, cocaine and fentanyl.
- When combined with fentanyl or other synthetic opioids, xylazine can increase the potential for fatal overdoses and cannot be reversed by naloxone.

IS THERE EVIDENCE OF XYLAZINE BEING USED IN IOWA?

- Yes. The Department of Health and Human Services have received reports, confirmed through various forms of testing, of the presence of xylazine in Iowa. All indications are that prevalence will increase.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE IF XYLAZINE USE IS SUSPECTED?

- Experts always recommend administering naloxone if someone may be suffering drug poisoning¹.
- People who use xylazine may develop necrotic wounds that may require the removal of damaged tissue or foreign objects from a wound and medical management.
- Chronic xylazine exposure can lead to physiologic dependence and withdrawal symptoms, which include irritability and anxiety.
- For more information, numerous alerts and informational documents have been developed.
 - [SAMHSA Dear Colleague Letter](#)
 - [White House ONDCP Briefing: Fentanyl Combined with Xylazine an Emerging Threat](#)

¹ <https://www.dea.gov/alert/dea-reports-widespread-threat-fentanyl-mixed-xylazine#:~:text=United%20States%20Drug%20Enforcement%20Administration,-Search&text>

² <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-alerts-health-care-professionals-risks-patients-exposed-xylazine-illicit-drugs>