

Xylazine (zai·luh·zeen)



Other names

Tranq	Tranq Dope
Zombie Drug	Philly Dope
Street-Cut	Anestesia de caballo
Rompun	AnaSed

What is xylazine?

- Xylazine is a **non-opioid** animal tranquilizer used in veterinary medicine that has been increasingly linked to drug overdose deaths in the U.S. due to it commonly being mixed with fentanyl and other illicit drugs, including cocaine and methamphetamine among others. (1, 2).
- **Xylazine has NEVER been approved for use in humans.**
- Xylazine is a central nervous system **depressant** with similar effects as opioids, making it difficult to determine whether an individual has used one or both substances (1).
- **The use of xylazine and opioids together increases the risk of life-threatening overdose** (3).

Xylazine in Arizona and the US

- Arizona has seen an increase in xylazine found at autopsy, but, as of 2022, has not yet documented a death determined to be caused by xylazine.
- The US DEA issued a public safety alert noting that xylazine is widespread and has been detected in about 23% of fentanyl powder and 7% of fentanyl pill seizures. The DEA reportedly has seized xylazine and fentanyl mixtures in 48 of 50 states (5).

How is xylazine used?

Xylazine-containing drugs can be injected, snorted, swallowed, or inhaled (3).

Effects of xylazine use

- Xylazine can cause high blood sugar, low blood pressure, slowed heart rate, and, at higher doses, can **reduce breathing** (2).
- Although rare, chronic use of xylazine-containing drugs can lead to dependency and withdrawal if stopped suddenly. Symptoms of xylazine withdrawal include irritability, anxiety, hypertension, and tachycardia (4).
- Injection use of xylazine has been associated with necrotic wounds, skin ulcers, abscesses, and other skin complications (3).

Xylazine wound care

- Xylazine wounds start as a small purple spots that look like bruises with irregular borders or blisters that are darker underneath. They are typically the size of a quarter, but can grow much larger without proper care.
- Xylazine wounds can form anywhere on the body, but are typically found on the arms and legs. They do not have to be at an injection site and can form regardless of the mode through which xylazine is used.
- Xylazine wounds should be treated right away. Most importantly, xylazine wounds should be kept clean, moist or debrided, and covered.
- If Xylazine wounds are not kept moist, they can dry out tissue, resulting in tissue death, which can lead to amputations.
- If a wound isn't healing, gets bigger or worse, or the skin starts to turn black, medical attention should be sought immediately.

Overdose: What to do -

- If an overdose from a xylazine-containing drug occurs, **administer naloxone**.

Naloxone will not reverse the effects of xylazine, but it will reverse the effects of fentanyl and other opioids that have been mixed with xylazine.

- After naloxone is administered, call 9-1-1 for help and provide rescue breathing while waiting for medical help. Inform EMS and trained medical professionals of the possibility of a xylazine-involved overdose.

Other things to know...

- Xylazine's presence in the illicit drug supply, particularly as an adulterant of fentanyl, may increase the risk of overdose among people who use drugs (PWUD).
- Rapid fentanyl testing strips cannot detect the presence of xylazine, so it's important that PWUD be aware that xylazine may be present in their drugs.

(1) Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. (2023, February 21). [Xylazine: What Health Agencies Need to Know](#).

(2) Drug Enforcement Administration. (2022, October). [The Growing Threat of Xylazine and its Mixture with Illicit Drugs](#).

(3) National Institute on Drug Abuse. [Xylazine](#).

(4) Philadelphia Department of Health. (2022, March 16). [Risk of Xylazine Use and Withdrawal in People Who Use Drugs in Philadelphia](#).

(5) Drug Enforcement Administration. (2023, March). [DEA Reports Widespread Threat of Fentanyl Mixed with Xylazine](#).