



# State of New Hampshire

## Department of Safety

Division of Fire Standards and Training & Emergency Medical Services  
 98 Smokey Bear Boulevard, Concord, New Hampshire  
 Mailing Address: 33 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03305-0002

Business: (603) 223-4200 Fax: (603) 271-1091



Robert L. Quinn  
 Commissioner

Justin A. Cutting  
 Director

# CLINICAL BULLETIN

Bulletin #	Title			Date Issued
79	Xylazine-Involved Overdose Deaths			January 6, 2023
Superseded	Released By	Approved By	Source	For More Information
	FSTEMS	Dr. Joey Scollan	FDA & NIDA	FST/EMS (603) 223-4200

Xylazine has been detected in a growing number of overdose deaths. Xylazine (also known as “tranq” or “tranq dope”) is being adulterated with fentanyl, heroin, cocaine and a variety of other drugs. Xylazine is NOT approved for human use and has only been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in animals as a sedative, pain reliever and muscle relaxant.

Xylazine use presents similar to an opioid overdose with central nervous system and respiratory depression. When combined with opioids, these effects can be significant.

Symptoms can include:

- Bradycardia
- Hypotension
- Respiratory depression or arrest
- Drowsiness or sedation
- Disorientation
- Soft tissue injury with possible infections

Treating Xylazine Overdose:

- Naloxone can reverse the effects of opioids however it has no effect on Xylazine.
- There is no pharmaceutical antidote specific to Xylazine.
- EMS Providers should follow the Opioid Overdose Protocol 2.15 to include:
  - Airway management
  - Administration of naloxone (in case of opioid and Xylazine polysubstance use)
  - Continuous respiratory monitoring and support
- EMS Providers should suspect Xylazine use in patients who do not respond to naloxone.

**Additional Resources:**

**FDA alerts health care professionals of risks to patients exposed to Xylazine in illicit drugs (8Nov22)**

“Health care professionals should be cautious of possible Xylazine inclusion in fentanyl, heroin, and other illicit drug overdoses, as naloxone may not be able to reverse its effects. FDA is aware of increasing reports of serious side effects from individuals exposed to fentanyl, heroin, and other illicit drugs contaminated with Xylazin.

Health care professionals should continue to administer naloxone for opioid overdoses and consider Xylazine exposure if patients are not responding to naloxone or when there are signs or symptoms of Xylazine exposure (e.g., severe, necrotic skin ulcerations). Health care professionals should provide appropriate supportive measures to patients who do not respond to naloxone.”

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

### **Xylazine – National Institute on Drug Abuse**

“Xylazine, a non-opioid veterinary tranquilizer not approved for human use, has been linked to an increasing number of overdose deaths nationwide in the evolving drug addiction and overdose crisis. 1 Studies show people exposed to Xylazine often knowingly or unknowingly used it in combination with other drugs, particularly illicit fentanyl... 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...”

<https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/xylazine>