

# OPIOID RESPONSE CENTER

## Delaware Partner Information Bulletin

### XYLAZINE

#### What is Xylazine or “Tranq Dope”

- Xylazine is an alpha-2 adrenergic agonist (opposes the effects of the sympathetic nervous system, decreasing smooth muscle contractions).
- When cut into opioids, it is known by the street name “Tranq Dope.”
- It is approved for veterinary use only, and typically for sedation of large animals. Its effects can last 6-8 hours in humans.
- Since it is not intended for human use, Xylazine is not a controlled substance.

#### Risks Associated with Xylazine

- When combined with opioids, Xylazine leads to an increased risk of an overdose.
- Bordering states have reported increases in Xylazine in their illicit drug supply and an increase in deaths attributed to Xylazine.
- Injecting Xylazine may increase the risk of skin ulcers that spread and worsen quickly.
- Xylazine use may lead to unconsciousness, low blood pressure, slower heart rate, slower breathing, sores, and serious skin infections.

#### Treatment Provider Awareness

- Xylazine does not show up in routine urine drug screens.
- Repeated Xylazine use may appear in clients as severe, necrotic skin ulcerations or abscesses.
- Xylazine is NOT an opioid and does not bind to the opioid receptor. However, still administer naloxone and follow the same response steps/rescue breathing during a suspected overdose.
- Educate and discuss with clients appropriate wound care and encourage harm reduction techniques:
  - Do not use alone, notify or have other people around to help in the event of accidental overdose
  - Carry and use naloxone on friends/family members to treat an overdose
  - Use sterile syringes and clean the skin to prevent infections
- There is limited information on the impact of Xylazine adulteration and drug overdoses. Several federal and state agencies are collaborating to assess the impact. We are continuing to assess the impact of Xylazine and researching solutions to address this emerging threat.



# OPIOID RESPONSE CENTER

## Delaware Client/Patient Information Bulletin

### XYLAZINE (ZY-lah-zeen)

#### What is Xylazine or “Tranq Dope”

- Xylazine is a veterinary tranquilizer, increasingly cut in fentanyl and heroin, known by the street name “Tranq Dope” or “Tranq.”
- Delaware had a total of 515 overdose fatalities during 2021. 82% of those included fentanyl.
- Our neighboring states are reporting significant increases in overdose deaths attributed to Xylazine mixed with opioids, especially when mixed with fentanyl.
- Xylazine is NOT an opioid. It is a long-lasting sedative, added to opioids to increase potency.
- Xylazine can not be seen when mixed, so individuals may not be aware of its presence.
- Xylazine is a health hazard to humans. It can lead to oversedation and death during an overdose. When repeatedly injected, Xylazine can also cause severe ulcers and skin infections.

#### What to do in an Overdose with Xylazine

- Call 911 and stay with the person until emergency medical services arrives.
- Administer naloxone (Narcan), and follow the same response steps as normal for an opioid overdose. Naloxone will not reverse the Xylazine, but it will reverse the effects of the opioids, and help to restore normal breathing.
- Remember, the purpose of naloxone is to restore normal breathing, not wake them up.
- The person’s breathing may return after receiving naloxone, but continue to monitor closely until help arrives, as the sedating effects of Xylazine can last 6-8 hours.
- If the person is not breathing after naloxone (Narcan) administration, or is having difficulty breathing, continue to give rescue breaths.
- If someone has passed out but is still breathing, put them in the recovery position (shown here) and continue to watch their breathing until help arrives.



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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