OVERDOSE RESPONSE CENTER

Delaware Client Information Bulletin

#2026-04

MEDETOMIDINE-ASSOCIATED WITHDRAWAL

(meh-deh-TOH-mih-deen)

What is Medetomidine

- Medetomidine is a veterinary tranquilizer and is not approved for human use.
- Medetomidine has largely replaced xylazine in Delaware's street drug supply.
- Although medetomidine does not appear to cause skin infections, it can cause a slow heart rate, difficulty breathing, low blood pressure, and significant sedation.
- Withdrawal symptoms with medetomidine are usually much more severe than typical opioid withdrawal.



Testing for Medetomidine

- It is important to know if medetomidine is in your drug supply before using.
- Medetomidine test strips are available for free from various state partners and outreach teams.



Image credit: WRTV, BTNX, WiseBatch.

What to Know About Medetomidine

- During an overdose with medetomidine, continue to use naloxone, and follow the same overdose response steps as normal. The goal of naloxone is still to help restore normal breathing.
- Medetomidine withdrawal often begins within 6 to 12 hours of last use.
- Withdrawal symptoms may be severe and can include high blood pressure, rapid heart beat, anxiety, nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, excessive sweating, and muscle tremors. Severe withdrawal will most likely require medical treatment at a hospital, possibly in the Intensive Care Unit.
- After treatment, it is very common for people to continue feeling sick, even when their health and physical appearance are improving. It will take some time for people to actually feel better.
- It is strongly suggested to not leave the hospital until told it is safe. Leaving too soon increases the risk for worsening withdrawal symptoms and for unintentional overdose.

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH

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