

Xylazine Found in Samples from the Local Rhode Island Drug Supply



testRI is a two-year study to find out what is in the drug supply in Rhode Island and how changes to the supply are impacting people who use drugs in our community. We are testing used equipment, like pipes and syringes, that are collected from the community or donated by individuals or local organizations. Samples are tested using advanced confirmatory toxicology testing (LC-QTOF-MS).

Data from all samples tested in the study can be found on <https://preventoverdoseri.org/local-drug-supply/>

*Samples we have collected and tested only represent a small part of the local drug supply in Rhode Island and may not represent the broader drug supply in the state. Samples are also not being tested in relation to overdose so outcomes from use, like overdose, are unknown.

Xylazine:

Background:

Recently xylazine was found in multiple drug samples in Rhode Island. In some places, it is referred to as “tranq dope.”

Xylazine is a long-acting and sedating medication used as a veterinary sedative, **but it is not an opioid.**

Xylazine has been associated with fatal and nonfatal overdoses both alone and in combination with other drugs (mainly fentanyl).



Why does this matter?

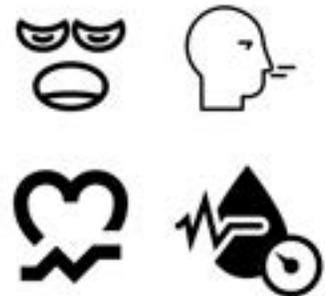
When xylazine is added to fentanyl/heroin the risk of overdose is higher.

Narcan (naloxone) will reverse the effects of opioids but has not been documented to reverse xylazine’s sedating effects. If a person overdoses from a substance cut with xylazine they might still be sedated after Narcan administration.



Health Effects:

Xylazine can cause drowsiness, unresponsiveness, low blood pressure, slow heart rate, and decreased breathing.



When used with other sedating drugs like opioids, xylazine can increase the risk of overdose and/or death.

Xylazine use has been associated with skin ulcers and infection.



Chronic use of xylazine can lead to dependence and a withdrawal syndrome that can cause irritability, anxiety, and dysphoria.

