



# **XYLAZINE 101: XYLAZINE USE AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This snapshot of information is intended to provide resources to individuals, parents, professionals, and providers on xylazine use and its impact on communities across the United States.

## **WHAT IS XYLAZINE?**

Xylazine is an FDA-approved veterinary tranquilizer, often known as "TRANQ," not approved for human use.<sup>1</sup>

Xylazine is often ingested, inhaled, or more commonly injected with other drugs such as fentanyl and/or heroin, enhancing risks for exposure to these substances, such as overdose.<sup>3</sup>

## **DISPARITIES AMONG HISPANIC AND LATINO POPULATIONS**

Although early reports of xylazine have been linked to Puerto Rican communities since the early 2000s, more research is required to document risk-use disparities for Hispanic/Latino populations.<sup>4</sup>

## **DANGERS OF XYLAZINE USE**

Xylazine significantly lowers a person's breathing, blood pressure, heart rate, and body temperature to dangerous levels.<sup>5</sup>

Xylazine use can cause severe wounds and infections that can lead to amputations of limbs. These wounds may develop in areas outside the injection site which can be fatal.<sup>5</sup>

# Xylazine use and its impact on communities across the United States



Xylazine has been detected in unintentional overdose deaths that involved heroin and/or fentanyl.<sup>2</sup>

Detections of xylazine has increased from 40 cases between 2010 and 2015 to 67 (11%) in 2016, 90 (10%) in 2017, 152 (18%) in 2018, and 262 (31%) in 2019.<sup>2</sup>

In all four U.S. census regions, xylazine-related fatal overdoses increased between 2020 and 2021.<sup>7</sup>

#### Northeast Region:

631 (2020) - 1,281 (2021), 103% ↑

#### South Region:

116 (2020) - 1,423 (2021), 1,127% ↑

#### Midwest Region:

57 (2020) - 351 (2021), 516% ↑

#### West Region:

4 (2020) - 34 (2021), 750% ↑<sup>1</sup>

The prevalence and number of overdose deaths associated with xylazine are difficult to estimate since routine tests seldom measure xylazine use.<sup>1</sup>



Withdrawal from xylazine can be as severe or even more severe than withdrawal from heroin or methadone. Some symptoms include chest pains and seizures.<sup>1</sup>



**Interventions**  
No human-safe intervention for xylazine is known.<sup>1</sup>

It is important to note that xylazine is not an opioid, and naloxone (brand name NARCAN) cannot reverse its effects.<sup>1</sup>

Naloxone, however, can still be administered to address opioid effects on breathing, which may be sufficient to prevent death.<sup>1,9</sup>

## References

1. [FDA Alerts Health Care Professionals of Risks to Patients Exposed to Xylazine in Illicit Drugs](#)
2. [Increasing Presence of Xylazine in Heroin and/or Fentanyl Deaths, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2010–2019](#)
3. [Notes from the Field: Xylazine, a Veterinary Tranquilizer, Identified as an Emerging Novel Substance in Drug Overdose Deaths — Connecticut, 2019–2020](#)
4. [Xylazine \(Veterinary Sedative\) Use in Puerto Rico](#)
5. [FDA Takes Action to Restrict Unlawful Import of Xylazine](#)
6. [How Xylazine, a Veterinary Tranquilizer, is Making Overdoses Even Riskier](#)
7. [The Growing Threat of Xylazine and its Mixture with Illicit Drugs](#)

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