

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What are they?

Nitazenes are depressants.



Nitazenes are a class of highly potent synthetic opioids that act on the same receptors in the body as drugs like morphine, fentanyl, and heroin. They can be up to 500 times more potent than morphine. Examples include isotonitazene, metonitazene, etonitazene, and protonitazene. They were originally developed for medical research, and are **not approved for human use**.

Nitazenes are stronger than fentanyl, and even very small amounts can cause overdose. They are increasingly found in the illegal drug supply, often mixed with other substances.

Because they are so potent and not well known, they carry a high risk of overdose and death. Nitazenes are sold on the illegal market in Canada. As they are not intended for human use, no legal source exists for these substances.

How are they used?

Nitazenes are sold as powders, but may come in a liquid form. They may be taken orally, snorted, smoked, or injected.



Nitazenes may be added to other drugs like heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, or MDMA to enhance their effects.

They may also be added to **counterfeit pills** that are made to look like prescription opioids. As a result, people may consume nitazenes without knowing.



**Other
names for
nitazenes**

Iso
(isonitazene)

Nitro

Synthetic
opioids

Research
opioids

What are the effects?

Nitazenes carry a very high risk of overdose and death.



Nitazenes carry an extremely high risk of overdose and death, especially for someone whose body is not used to opioids.



Nitazenes are highly addictive. Regular use needs increasing amounts for the same effect. They may cause withdrawal symptoms if stopped suddenly.



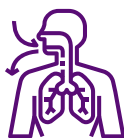
Given their potency, tiny amounts of nitazenes are often enough to cause overdose. Even for a regular opioid user, the difference between a regular dose and a fatal dose is very small.



Nitazenes are so potent that they may not respond to regular naloxone doses. Multiple doses of naloxone may be required.



Nitazenes can cause drowsiness, dizziness and confusion. They can also cause nausea and digestive problems.



Nitazenes slow down body processes, such as breathing and heart rate. These changes can lead to overdose or death.

When do you seek emergency help?



Nitazene overdose or poisoning: Nitazenes can slow or stop your breathing, causing unconsciousness and death. The risk is especially high with these drugs because they are extremely strong (potent). There is an even greater risk of overdose if your body is not used to taking opioids.

Signs: The person may become very sleepy and then become unconscious and cannot be woken up. They may have slow breathing, a weak pulse, and their skin may become clammy, pale or blue, particularly at their lips and fingernails.

This is an emergency! Call 911 right away and give naloxone if it is available. Multiple doses of naloxone may be needed. Put the person in the recovery position and stay with them until help arrives.

Did you know?

Nitazenes are **very hard to detect**. They are odorless and tasteless.

Sub-milligram amounts (smaller than a grain of salt) can be **lethal**.



Are there tests for nitazenes?

No readily available tests can detect nitazenes.

Specialized labs can detect them, but at home tests (like fentanyl test strips) will not.

Nitazenes and other potent opioids are being increasingly found in the illegal drug supply. **Because they are difficult to detect, people may use them unknowingly. Assume any illegal drug supply is high risk.**



For more information visit us at:
www.DECYDE.ca

How to stay safer?



Not using nitazenes is the best way to stay safer and avoid harms.

If you still decide to use nitazenes, consider these harm reduction strategies:

1

Avoid illegal supplies of substances. Unregulated substances may contain unexpected and highly potent substances, such as nitazines and other opioids.

2

Avoid using nitazenes even if you use opioids regularly. It is a very potent opioid that will stop breathing if your body is not used to opioids.

3

Don't use substances alone. Have someone with you in case you need help or naloxone. Don't use in isolated areas where medical help is unavailable. Consider using substances in a supervised consumption site.

4

Start low and go slow. Even if you have used opioids before, start with very low doses of any new supply.

5

Keep a **naloxone kit** on hand if you or someone else may be using substances.

6

Call 911 immediately if someone is showing symptoms of an overdose.

Naloxone can save a life!

Naloxone is used to **temporarily reverse the effects of opioids**. Giving naloxone when someone doesn't need it won't harm them.

3 or more doses may be needed for nitazenes.

Check out our naloxone instructions: **decyde.ca/educational-materials/#substance-use**

