

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

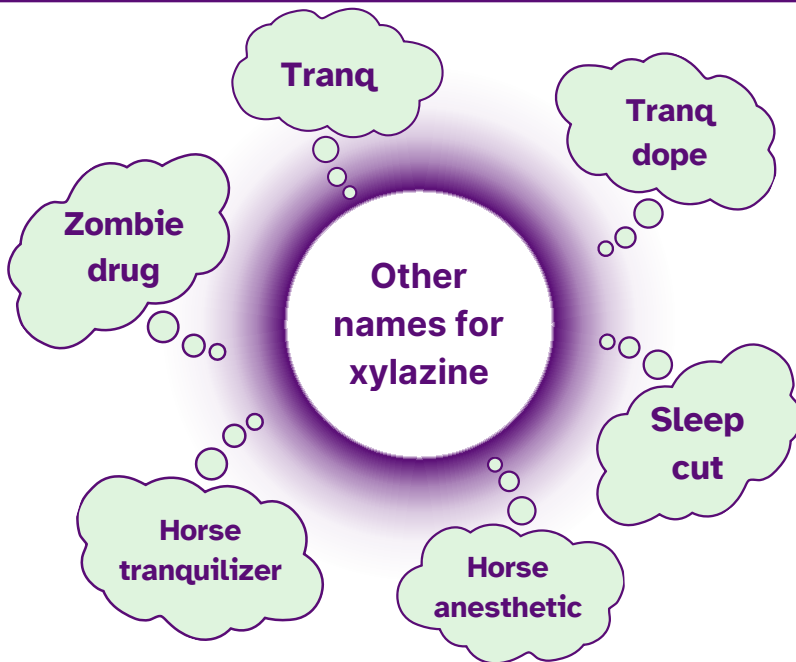


What is it?

Xylazine is a depressant

Xylazine is a veterinary medication used for sedation and pain relief in animals. It is a non-opioid alpha-2 adrenergic agonist that slows activity in the brain and body, leading to drowsiness, low heart rate, and slowed breathing. It is **not approved for human use** because trials deemed it too dangerous.

Xylazine is increasingly found mixed with opioids like fentanyl in the illegal drug supply. This combination increases the risk of overdose and death. Xylazine can also constrict blood vessels and affect blood flow, which may contribute to severe skin wounds and ulcers, even in areas where it was not injected.



How is it used?

Xylazine is usually sold as a powder. It may be taken orally, snorted, smoked, or injected.



In veterinary use, xylazine is administered in liquid form as an injection.

Xylazine is often added to other drugs like heroin or fentanyl to prolong or enhance their effects.

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



What are the effects?

Xylazine carries a very high risk of overdose and death.



Causes deep sedation, extreme drowsiness, and unconsciousness.



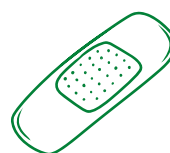
Slows heart rate and breathing, especially when combined with opioids.



Can cause fatal overdose by stopping breathing.



Unlike opioids, effects are not reversed by naloxone.



Causes severe skin wounds and ulcers, even in areas other than injection sites.



Effects are unpredictable - a dose that affects one person may be fatal to another.

When do you seek emergency help?



Xylazine overdose or poisoning: Xylazine can slow or stop breathing, causing unconsciousness and death. The risk is especially high when it is mixed with opioids like fentanyl. There is no approved antidote for xylazine, so treatment focuses on supportive care.

Signs: The person may become very drowsy then unresponsive and cannot be awakened. They may have slowed or irregular breathing, a slow heart rate, or cold, pale, or bluish skin. Severe skin wounds or infections may also be present. It can be difficult to tell the difference between feeling high and dangerous sedation, so early recognition is important.

This is an emergency! Call 911 right away and give naloxone if opioids may be present. Place the person in the **recovery position** and stay with them until help arrives.

Did you know?

Xylazine is often mixed with other drugs.

In Canada, almost 8 out of 10 drug samples of Xylazine contained 2 to 4 other substances, with fentanyl being the most common.

How to stay safer?



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

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



Never Use Alone: Have someone nearby or use supervised services.



Carry Naloxone: If opioids are present in combination with xylazine, it can reverse opioid effects.



Start Low, Go Slow: Potency is unpredictable, even if you have used similar drugs before.



Avoid mixing substances: Especially alcohol or other depressant drugs.



Wound care matters: Keep wounds clean and covered. Seek care early to prevent infection.



Use safer practices: Avoid injecting into wounds, clean the skin with alcohol before use, and use sterile equipment (many pharmacies will provide supplies for free).

Other Drugs like Xylazine

Other depressants like medetomidine and dexmedetomidine have similar effects but are up to **200 times more potent than xylazine**. They are less common than xylazine but have been reported in the illegal drug supply.

For more information visit us at:

www.DECYDE.ca