

What is xylazine?

www.crew.scot



XYLAZINE

Pronounced: zai-lah-zeen

- Xylazine has been recently detected in the UK and Scottish drug market. It is as a non-opioid animal sedative and muscle relaxant **(not intended for human use)**. It is most often sold as or found in other drugs.
- Xylazine has been found in powders (appearing brown, pink or colourless), contaminated heroin, and vape liquid.
- **People who have taken xylazine report:** feeling generally unwell, nausea or vomiting, and have reported that xylazine doesn't smell like heroin and has more of a chemical or even 'fishy' smell.
- While xylazine was first detected in Scotland in 2020, its current presence has emerged suddenly, and **the number of detections continue to increase** in other drugs.

- **Effects include** sedation, loss of coordination, difficulty breathing, low blood pressure and slowed heart rate.
- Xylazine may slow down heart rate and breathing, **and can be potentially life threatening if mixed** with other 'downer' type drugs, such as alcohol, opioids, benzodiazepines (Valium, Xanax, etizolam), GHB and ketamine.
- Xylazine is being sold as or found in some of these drugs, so **if you feel unwell, stay with someone and seek help.**
- The amount of xylazine type drugs found in powders **varies** so it would be almost impossible to judge an accurate dose.

- **Xylazine is not an opioid, so naloxone is not effective in reversing its effects.**
- **Naloxone will remain effective against opioids which may have been consumed with the xylazine.** If in doubt administer naloxone, but always call 999 as treating an overdose that involves xylazine requires medical care in a hospital setting.
- **Test your drugs** - this allows you to be more aware of unexpected contents:
www.crew.scot/how-do-i-test-my-drugs
- **Start with a test dose.**
- **If possible, try not to take your drugs alone, and encourage your mates not to take them alone either. Stay with a group of people you trust and look out for each other, staying aware of the signs of an overdose.**

- Xylazine has been **linked to skin wounds**, lesions and ulcers that can become **infected**, increasing the risk of Blood-borne Viruses (BBVs) and potentially leading to serious infections, such as sepsis.
- Use clean injecting equipment provided by an **Injecting Equipment Provider (IEP)**¹ to prevent the spread of infections or Blood-Borne Viruses (BBVs).
- Ensure any wounds or ulcerations that you may have are **treated properly**. Your Injecting Equipment Provider can either provide this care or signpost you to the appropriate service.
- If you are **concerned**, try to speak to a pharmacist, GP or, if you inject drugs, a professional at an Injecting Equipment Provider (IEP) for support.

Familiarise yourself with the signs of a depressant overdose so that you feel confident about what to do to help.

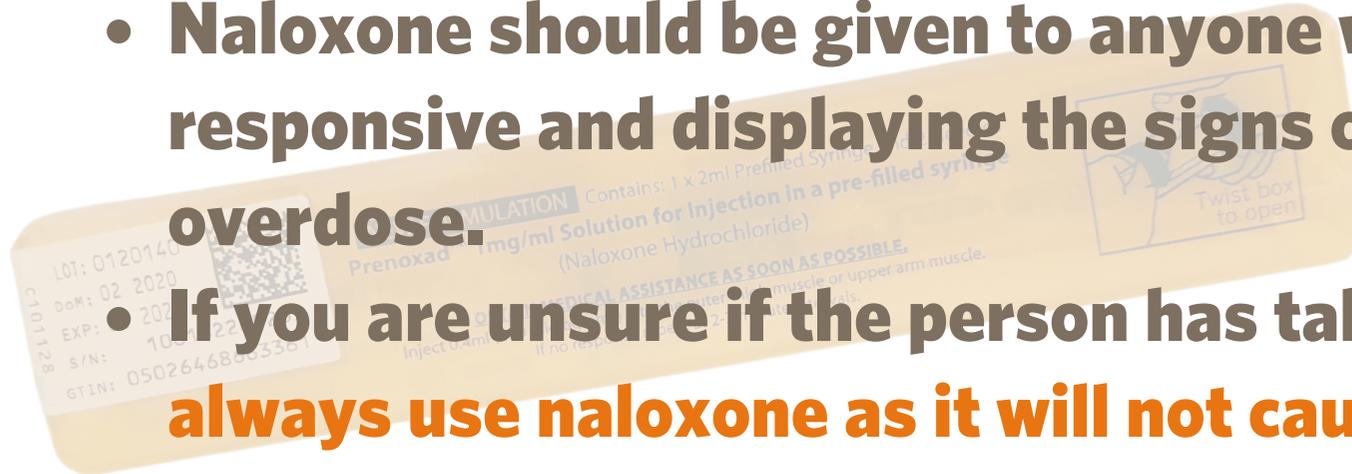
Signs of an overdose

- **Confusion**
- **Unconsciousness - won't wake with a shout or a shake**
- **Severe nausea and vomiting**
- **Fitting**
- **Difficulty breathing**
- **Snoring/raspy breathing**
- **Blue/pale tingeing of knees, hands and lips (or a gray appearance in people with darker skin tones)**
- **Slow or erratic pulse (heartbeat)**
- **Pale, cold and clammy skin**
- **If synthetic opioids are present, they may cause seizure-like symptoms (fits/muscle spasm/rigid or tight muscles/tightness in the chest that makes breathing difficult)**

Administering Naloxone

- Naloxone should be given to anyone who is non-responsive and displaying the signs of a **depressant overdose**.
- **If you are unsure if the person has taken opioids, always use naloxone as it will not cause harm** and could save their life. Other 'downer' drugs such as xylazine or benzos will not be reversed by naloxone.
- **You should still administer naloxone** as this will reverse the effects of opioids and allow the person's body the chance to respond to the 'downer' effects of any other drugs and **could save their life!**
- **Prenoxad (injectable) and Nyxoid (nasal spray) are two medical products containing naloxone hydrochloride.**

In Scotland the provision of naloxone is **FREE** and anyone aged 14 and over can grab a naloxone kit from the Crew Drop-in www.crew.scot/what-we-do/get-naloxone



In an emergency

- Always **call 999** in an emergency.
- **If the person stops breathing**, perform CPR (chest compressions and rescue breaths) where possible.
- If the person is breathing, put them into the **recovery position** (as shown on next page).
- Injectable **naloxone** should be administered into the muscle at the top of the thigh.
- It can also be administered into the top part of the arm between the elbow and shoulder where vaccines are usually administered.
- If someone has not responded to the first dose of injectable naloxone, then additional doses can be administered at **two-minute** intervals until they begin to respond or an ambulance arrives.

THE RECOVERY POSITION

- 1.** Put the hand closest to you by the head (as if they were waving).
- 2.** Put the arm furthest away from you across the chest, so that the back of the hand rests against the cheek.
- 3.** Hold the hand and lift up the knee furthest away from you, then turn them on their side by pushing down on their knee.
- 4.** Open their airway by gently tilting their head back and lifting their chin, and check that nothing is blocking their airway.





**Scottish
Families**

Affected by Alcohol & Drugs

www.sfad.org.uk

Family support, bereavement support,
telephone and webchat, postal naloxone.

Helpline: **08080 101011**



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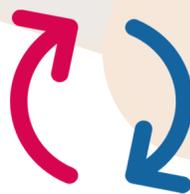
Face to face and digital Drop-in, information,
in person naloxone provision.



ScottishDrugServices
Directory

www.scottishdrugservices.com

Online directory contact information and
details for over 200 agencies in Scotland who
can help with drug treatment and care.



**Scottish
Needle Exchange**
Directory

www.needleexchange.scot

The Needle Exchange Directory provides a list
of all the services that provide injecting
equipment in Scotland.



SDF
Scottish Drugs
Forum

www.sdf.org.uk

Scotland's national membership organisation
offering training, resources and policy work.

withyou

**EXCHANGE
SUPPLIES**
MAKING INJECTING SAFER

**WEDI
NOS**

Release
Drugs, The Law & Your Rights


EuroNPUD
European Network of People who Use Drugs

www.wearewithyou.org.uk

Confidential, online and face to face support services for people in England and Scotland.

www.exchangesupplies.org

A social enterprise working to improve the harm reduction response to drug use by developing products and information for injecting drug users, drug services, and needle exchanges.

www.wedinos.org

Welsh Emerging Drugs and Identification of Novel Substances - anonymous and free postal drug testing service.

www.release.org.uk

Drugs, the law and your rights.

Free legal advice helpline: **0207 324 2989**

www.euronpud.net

European Network of People Who Use Drugs works with all drug user groups in Europe.



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