



Public Health Advisory  
05/15/2024

**Xylazine detected in Clark County, NV**  
**SITUATIONAL AWARENESS SUMMARY**

**SITUATION:** The Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) urges heightened awareness regarding the presence of xylazine within the local illicit drug supply through its drug paraphernalia surveillance efforts. Since November 2022, 497 drug paraphernalia samples have been collected, with methamphetamine (52.9%) and heroin (41.8%) most frequently detected. Xylazine has been found in two samples as of May 14, 2024. Samples tested from various drug paraphernalia include but are not limited to needles, pipes, and cookers.

- Xylazine, commonly termed “tranq” or “tranq dope”, is a nonopioid alpha-2 receptor agonist approved for veterinary use as a sedative and analgesic agent.
- When used in humans, **xylazine can be life threatening**, especially when combined with opioids like fentanyl.
- People who use illegal drugs may be unknowingly exposed to xylazine as it can be added to increase the weight or enhance the effects of other illegal drugs.
- **SNHD registered three overdose deaths involving xylazine among Clark County residents in 2023, contrasting with one death in 2020.**
- **Xylazine usage is associated with unique, difficult to treat wounds, skin-ulcers, and abscesses from injection use.**

The Southern Nevada Health District strongly advises all healthcare providers to adhere to the following protocol:

- 1) **Screen:** Implement **Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)** for all patients to promptly identify and manage individuals at risk or with substance use disorders. NRS 630.2535 mandates a minimum of two hours of SBIRT training. Access training resources can be found at: <https://nvopioidresponse.org/resources/practitioners/>
- 2) **Test:** Conduct test for multiple substances of abuse.
  - a. Note that routine toxicology screens do not include xylazine, which is rapidly eliminated from the body ( $T_{1/2}$  = 23-50 minutes).
  - b. Utilize xylazine test strips for checking illicit drug samples or residue sampling of paraphernalia.
- 3) **Treat:** While there is no specific treatment for xylazine, adhere to best practices
  - a. Administer naloxone for suspected overdose, despite it not being a direct reversal agent for xylazine, as opioids and xylazine are often co-present.
  - b. Provide supportive care for profound mental status depression and low blood pressure.
  - c. Recognize xylazine-associated wounds, which often manifest as partial or full-thickness ulcers with necrotic tissue, associated with a history of substance use, and are not always around the injection site that may require advanced wound care. Recommendations can be found here: [https://hip.phila.gov/document/4148/Recommendations\\_for\\_Caring\\_for\\_People\\_with\\_Xylazine-Associated\\_Wounds\\_1.12.pdf/](https://hip.phila.gov/document/4148/Recommendations_for_Caring_for_People_with_Xylazine-Associated_Wounds_1.12.pdf/)
- 4) **Counsel:** Share harm reduction messaging with patients, emphasizing testing of illicit drug supply, avoiding solo drug use, considering sniffing or smoking as probably safer alternatives than injecting and carrying naloxone.
- 5) **Contact:** Call SNHD Office of Disease Surveillance for harm reduction education and resources (intranasal naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and xylazine test strips) at 702-759-1300.

For more information on xylazine please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/about/what-you-should-know-about-xylazine.html>

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**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action

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