



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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St. Lawrence County warns of the dangers of Xylazine found in street drugs

Canton, NY — The St. Lawrence County Public Health Department is raising awareness about increased overdoses involving Xylazine. Xylazine is a powerful veterinary sedative that is not approved for human use.

Xylazine is a non-opioid medication used as a sedative and muscle relaxant in veterinary medicine for use in horses and large animals. Although not approved for human use, Xylazine is increasingly being added to street drugs. It is often found with fentanyl (a powerful synthetic opioid). It's sometimes called tranq, tranq dope, or sleep cut, and people usually use Xylazine unknowingly when their drugs are cut with it. When combined with a substance such as fentanyl, the effect on the central nervous and respiratory systems results in heavy sedation and increased overdose risk.

Xylazine is associated with severe wounds and infections that can quickly spread or worsen. These wounds can appear anywhere on the body, even beyond the injection site. The ulcers can take months or years to heal and may not heal without medical care. Anyone experiencing grey/blue/pale skin, numbness, tingling, if the affected area gets bigger, or you can see bone should see a medical provider immediately. The skin wounds deteriorate quickly and can be so severe that the infected body part may require amputation if left untreated.

If you think someone is overdosing:

- Call 911 Immediately. New York State's Good Samaritan Law allows people to call 911 without fear of getting arrested if they have a drug/alcohol overdose or witness someone overdosing. Don't run. Dial 911.
- Administer Narcan, if available.
- Try to keep the person awake and breathing.
- Lay the person on their side to prevent choking.
- Stay with the person until emergency assistance arrives.

It is important to remember that giving Narcan is critical because Xylazine is often mixed with an opioid. Xylazine is not an opioid, so sometimes administering one dose of Narcan won't reverse a deep Xylazine sedation. It may take multiple doses. You won't see the dramatic awakening common when Narcan is administered to someone who has overdosed after using



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an opioid. Narcan is available for free. For more information on how to get Narcan, visit St. Lawrence County Addiction Services at <https://stlawco.org/Departments/CommunityServices>.

For more information on Xylazine, please visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse website at <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/xylazine>.

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