

Xylazine:

Key Facts for the Criminal Justice System



The Basics

Xylazine, AKA tranq, is an animal sedative that is not approved for human use. It is not an opioid, but can be added to fentanyl and other opioids.

Harmful effects of xylazine:



Heavy sedation that can last hours



Low blood pressure & slowed heart rate



Difficulty breathing



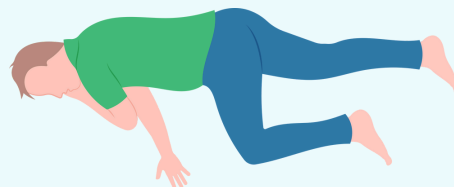
Wounds that do not always appear where the drug was injected

Coming Across Xylazine at Work

You come across an unconscious person.

Did they overdose or are they under the influence of xylazine?

- ✿ It can be difficult to tell! That is why it is important to respond as if it is an overdose until you have reason to believe otherwise.
- ✿ Remember, because xylazine is not an opioid, naloxone will not reverse its effects. However, naloxone won't hurt them if they don't have opioids in their system.
- ✿ After administering naloxone, consider giving rescue breaths. This is especially helpful for xylazine, since it slows breathing.
- ✿ Unconscious people should be moved into the recovery position whenever possible:
 - Laying on their side
 - Top leg bent across the body
 - Hand/arm supporting the head



You meet a person with painful wounds from xylazine. What do you need to know to help them heal?

- * Xylazine is thought to cause blood vessels to constrict, leading to decreased blood flow throughout the body. **This is why xylazine wounds don't always appear where a person injects.**
- * If not treated properly and timely, wounds can cause deep infections and lead to amputation, or even death.

How to clean xylazine wounds:



Clean xylazine wounds with **soap and water or saline**; avoid hydrogen peroxide and rubbing alcohol.



Keep the wound **moisturized with ointment** to help dead skin cells fall on their own.



Wounds should be covered with **non-adhesive dressings**, live gauze, and should be changed daily.



Refer the person to **medical care** for antibiotics and professional debridement.

- * Consider distributing wound care kits! Local harm reduction organizations or medical centers may have supplies available for CJS, but if not you can make your own with:

- Clean bottled water or saline and gentle soap
- Vitamin D ointment
- Gauze and breathable wraps
- Nitrile gloves

Additional Resources



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, [What You Should Know About Xylazine](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/deaths/other-drugs/xylazine/faq.html#print), 2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/deaths/other-drugs/xylazine/faq.html#print>



Homeless and Housing Resource Center, [Xylazine Basics: Overdose Prevention, Harm Reduction, and Wound Care](https://www.hhrctraining.org/knowledge-resources), 2023, <https://www.hhrctraining.org/knowledge-resources>.



Pennsylvania Department of Health, [Xylazine and Wound Care for Healthcare Providers](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Opioids/Xylazine%20Provider%20Info.pdf), 2023, <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Opioids/Xylazine%20Provider%20Info.pdf>