What is xylazine (zye-luh-zeen)?
Xylazine is a drug used in animals, such as horses, for sedation, numbing, and muscle relaxation. It is not an opioid (like fentanyl or oxycodone), but can increase the harmful effects of opioids.

- Xylazine is found mixed with drugs like heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamines. It is also called “tranq,” “zombie drug,” or “sleep cut.”
- Xylazine is linked with overdose deaths.
- You can’t tell whether a substance contains xylazine by how it looks, tastes, or cooks.

How is xylazine harmful?
It can cause:
- deep sedation/sleepiness, blackouts, and loss of consciousness.
- decreased breathing, blood pressure, and heart rate.
- severe wounds, which can spread and worsen quickly. They can occur whether xylazine is injected, snorted, or inhaled.

Long-term effects are not known.

How to reduce risk of harm
The only way to be sure you will not be harmed by xylazine is to avoid using non-prescribed drugs. If you are using these drugs, there are ways to reduce your risk of harm:

| Never take drugs alone | Have at least one person who can check on you, call 911, or use naloxone. |
| Consider calling Never Use Alone (1-800-484-3731) if you plan to use alone. |
| Xylazine can cause you to fall asleep for a long time. Make sure you and your belongings are in a safe place. Be in a comfortable position, not laying on top of your arms or legs. (This could stop blood flow to your limbs.) |

| Test product first | Test for xylazine using test strips from harm reduction programs, where available. A negative result does not guarantee the substance does not contain xylazine. |

| Take less; go slow | If you use, take a small amount of drug first. Wait several minutes between doses. |

| Use safer injection practices | Use new/sterile needles and sterile injection equipment. Do not share or reuse. |
| Clean skin with alcohol wipes and let air dry completely before injection. |
| If you are not able to wait for a new needle, clean the needle with bleach and clean water using the instructions found here: https://tinyurl.com/CDCcleansyr or use the QR code to the right. |
| For safer injection practices, visit https://tinyurl.com/VAADPWID or use the QR code to the right. |
**How to reduce risk of harm (continued)**

**Seek medical care for skin wounds**
- Do not inject any drug into wounds or areas around a wound.
- Monitor any skin wounds closely.
- Xylazine wounds often start as small red blisters that can appear anywhere. They can worsen quickly into large, deep wounds if not treated.
- Keep cuts/wounds covered and clean with soap and water. Avoid alcohol or hydrogen peroxide which can dry the wounds too much.
- Don’t scratch or pop the wounds.
- **Seek emergency care immediately if:**
  - any skin starts to change color (gets darker).
  - any skin becomes hard or soft, or loses sensation.
  - you have signs of infection (fever, chills, nausea, injection site feels hot or smells).

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<th>NALOXONE: Naloxone will not reverse the effect of xylazine, but it will help if opioids are present.</th>
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**Carry naloxone**
- Ask a VA provider for naloxone.
- Carry and know how to use naloxone.
- Make sure you and people near you (family/friends) know where to find naloxone and how to use it.

**What should I do if someone has overdosed or is not responding?**
- **Call 911 and use naloxone.**
- **Naloxone** will not reverse the effects of xylazine, but it will help if opioids, such as heroin or fentanyl, are making it hard to breathe.
- **Stay with the person;** check that they are taking at least 10 breaths per minute.
- If you must leave, place them in the recovery position to protect the airway (laying on the side with head supported).

**Help is available**
- **VA offers harm reduction, evidence-based therapy, and medicines** to help with your recovery journey. Help is available in outpatient, inpatient, and residential settings. To learn more, contact your VA provider or visit the website (QR code below as well): https://tinyurl.com/VASubstanceUse.
- Harm reduction programs in your area: https://nasen.org
- CDC Xylazine FAQ: www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/deaths/other-drugs/xylazine/faq.html

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[QR code for Preventing overdose]
[QR code for HIV & other infection information]
[QR code for VA substance use services]