

What you need know about medetomidine



What is it?

Medetomidine (meh-deh-TOH-mih-deen) is a veterinary tranquilizer that is 100-200x stronger than xylazine.



Where is it?

Has been found in fentanyl samples in Guelph and Wellington County. Toronto's Drug Checking Service detected it in 3 out of every 4 fentanyl samples tested.

Signs of medetomidine poisoning



- Prolonged and deep sedation ("knocked out")
- Very slow heart rate
- Low blood pressure
- Confusion and hallucinations
- Dry mouth
- Numb or "dead" limbs
- Not waking up when roused
- Naloxone doesn't wake them

How can someone help?



1. Check their breathing: Normal breathing is about 1 breath every 5 seconds.
2. Reposition them so their airway is open.
3. Make sure arms/legs aren't pinned under their body.

Medetomidine + Fentanyl



Medetomidine is almost always found with fentanyl. Naloxone treats the opioid portion of the poisoning, which can help restore breathing. But naloxone does not reverse medetomidine poisoning, so the person may still not wake up.



Call 911 immediately if someone isn't breathing!

Medetomidine withdrawal



Withdrawal can start suddenly and get worse quickly. It can cause:

- Dangerous high blood pressure
- Very fast heart rate
- Shaking or seizure-like jerking
- Heavy sweating
- Anxiety and restlessness



Go to the hospital immediately if:

- You can't stop vomiting
- You have chest pain
- You're going in and out of awareness, even while awake
- Withdrawal symptoms are more severe than your usual

How to be prepared



1. Use drug checking strips (if you have them) to test for Medetomidine.
2. Avoid using alone. If you know that medetomidine is in your supply, tell someone you trust as you might be sedated much longer than expected.
3. Choose a safe place to use where you can stay for several hours if needed.
4. Start low and go slow.
5. **If using alone, call NORS Safer Consumption Hotline: 1-888-688-6677.**



Visit wdgpublichealth.ca/HarmReduction for more information including resources, services, and medical guidance for medetomidine withdrawal.