



Xylazine Test Strip Counseling

Xylazine is often known in the community as “tranq,” “tranq dope,” and “Anestesia de Caballo.”

About Xylazine Test Strips:

Xylazine test strips are rapid assay tests designed to provide a rapid presumptive result for the presence of xylazine. They can detect as little as 0.1% – in liquid or powder dope samples.

Effects of Xylazine:

Xylazine test strips are very sensitive and will detect tiny amounts of xylazine, so little that the user may not find anything different about the product at all, or they may experience heavy sedation. These are some of the possible effects:

- It is thought that xylazine is added to opioids, especially fentanyl, to prolong the effect.
- It can lead to a very heavy, long nod, which is not the usual euphoric feeling of opioids.
- A person can pass out for a few hours without moving. This can lead to nerve and skin damage, as well as leave someone vulnerable to robbery and/or assault.
- Xylazine use can cause severe skin wounds in the form of ulcerations, rather than abscesses. They may not be at injection sites. It is thought that they may develop even in people who are not injecting, although this is unclear.

Xylazine Tests Strips As an Engagement Tool:

Xylazine test strips are a useful engagement tool that provide the opportunity to foster a discussion with persons who use drugs (PWUDs) around harm reduction (HR) options.

- **Action suggestions for a positive result:**
 - Very few people will have the resources to throw the product away, so this may not be a helpful message.
 - It is always best to be in a safe place with a trusted companion, and to take turns using, especially if using a new product.
 - As always, it is safest to start low and go slow.
 - Let someone know that the drugs you are using contain xylazine, and if an overdose occurs, you may still be sedated when given naloxone.
 - If you don't like xylazine, tell the person you got the product from that you prefer it without xylazine.
 - Be aware of skin wounds that get larger or are not healing. Get help early.
- **Administration:**
 - If people inject drugs, it is a good time to review safer injection practices.
 - There is nothing special about injecting xylazine; skin contact is not the cause of xylazine-associated skin wounds although wounds may be more likely with “skin popping.”
 - It is possible that skin wounds will occur even if the user is not injecting. This has not been confirmed though.
- **Overdose:** Xylazine is nearly always accompanied by fentanyl. It is unclear how much xylazine increases the risk of a fatal overdose.
 - Give a dose of naloxone and call 911. **Note:** *Naloxone has no impact on xylazine, but it can effectively reverse the effects of opioids including fentanyl, which can save a person's life by restoring their breathing. However, it is possible for the individual to remain heavily sedated even after receiving naloxone.*
 - Be sure they have an open airway, lie them on their back with their head tilted back, or in the rescue position.
 - Resuscitate with rescue breathing and/or chest compressions, if possible. In any case, be sure the airway is open.

- It's important to note that because of the effects of xylazine, individuals may not fully regain consciousness. Therefore, before administering multiple doses of naloxone, it's recommended to check for any response to external stimuli, such as mumbling or movement. Too much naloxone is better than death, but severe withdrawal can cause unnecessary suffering, as well as vomiting, which can be dangerous in a sedated person. If a person is clearly breathing at a rate of at least 10-12 breaths per minute, it is recommended to place them in the rescue position.
- If the sedation is deep or prolonged, the person may need medical support. If so, call 911.

Testing Cocaine:

- Cocaine is often cut with lidocaine. Lidocaine gives a false positive test for xylazine. However, since xylazine is rarely present without fentanyl, testing for fentanyl may be a good idea.

Note: There is much about xylazine and xylazine test strips that is still unknown. Therefore, it is vital to follow up with individuals using xylazine and receiving test strips to further discuss their experiences with xylazine and how they're utilizing the knowledge of its presence in their product.

For more information on xylazine, see this fact sheet: <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/12044.pdf>