



County of San Diego

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XYLAZINE ALERT FOR EMS PROFESSIONALS

County EMS has been alerted from external sources that [xylazine](#) has been detected domestically in illicit drug markets. This memo provides an alert for first responders encountering patients who may have unknowingly injected or ingested this substance. Xylazine is a non-opioid veterinary muscle relaxant that is found as an adulterant to heroin, fentanyl, and cocaine. It can cause sedation that is not reversed by naloxone.

Xylazine can take effect within minutes and last up to four hours. According to the [DEA](#), "xylazine decreases the release of norepinephrine and dopamine in the central nervous system resulting in effects such as analgesia, sedation and muscle relaxation." In addition, xylazine may have other toxic manifestations including blurred vision, disorientation, drowsiness, bradycardia, hypotension, staggering, hyperglycemia, miosis, respiratory depression, coma, and death.

After administering naloxone to altered patients per protocols [S-123](#), [S-134](#), [S-161](#), and [S-165](#), if respiratory depression persists, provide ventilation via bag-valve-mask or other means, as indicated. As always, situation-specific personal protective equipment should be worn when there is a potential for secondary contamination with unknown substances found at the scene of an emergency.

For any questions or concerns regarding scene management of patients who may have been exposed to xylazine, please contact the base hospital. Thank you for continuing to provide outstanding care to our patients.

Respectfully,

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