

Medetomidine: Know the Facts

What is medetomidine?

- Medetomidine, or “rhino tranq,” is a veterinary sedative that is similar to xylazine. Medetomidine is not an opioid but has been found with opioids in the NYC drug supply.
- The main effect of medetomidine is heavy sedation. It can also lower blood pressure and heart rate, which may cause symptoms such as dizziness, extreme tiredness, shortness of breath, nausea, blurred vision, and confusion.
- Medetomidine can also cause severe withdrawal symptoms that may require intensive medical care.



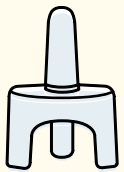
Where has it been found?

Medetomidine has been found in the NYC drug supply since June 2024.

- It has only been found in drugs sold as dope (opioids).

How does medetomidine affect overdose?

Medetomidine has so far only been found in the opioid supply. A person who experiences an opioid- and medetomidine-involved overdose may remain sedated and unresponsive even after receiving naloxone.



Does naloxone work on medetomidine?

Medetomidine is not an opioid, so naloxone does not reverse its effects. However, medetomidine is usually found with opioids, so it is important to have naloxone on hand and to use it if someone shows signs of an overdose. Naloxone will still reverse the effects of opioids even if the person stays sedated due to the medetomidine.

How should you respond to a medetomidine overdose?

1. Check for responsiveness.
 - Shout in the person’s ear. If they do not respond, grind your knuckles into their breastbone (sternal rub).
 - If the person does not respond to a sternal rub, call **911** and administer naloxone.
2. Call **911** and administer naloxone.
 - Perform rescue breathing, especially if the person’s breath is stopped or irregular.
 - If the person is still not breathing after two to three minutes, administer another dose of naloxone.
3. Continue to watch the person’s breathing. They may remain sedated even after they resume breathing.
 - Make sure the person takes at least one breath every five seconds and does not look pale, gray, or blue.

- If the person has resumed breathing but remains sedated, additional doses of naloxone are not required.
4. Place the person in the recovery position (on their side with their top leg bent for stability).
- This helps ensure that the person's airway and circulation are not cut off.

What are the other health effects of medetomidine?

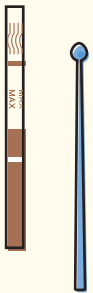


Medetomidine has been shown to cause severe withdrawal symptoms in people who use drugs. This withdrawal can be dangerous and may require intensive medical care. Symptoms include:

- Fast heart rate (more than 100 beats per minute)
- Dangerously high blood pressure (180/120 or higher)
- Uncontrollable nausea and vomiting
- Tremor
- Excessive sweating
- Changing levels of alertness and confusion

Does medetomidine cause skin wounds?

No. Unlike xylazine, medetomidine has not been shown to cause skin wounds.



How can someone tell if there is medetomidine in their drugs?

Medetomidine has become widespread in the local opioid supply. Some ways to learn about the contents of your drugs include:

- Use medetomidine test strips.
- Bring your drugs to an NYC drug checking location to have them analyzed and learn more about reducing your risks.
- Talk to people you know about how the drugs on the street are making them feel.

How can someone reduce their risk of harm from drugs that contain medetomidine?

- Start with a little and wait to see how you feel before using more.
- Avoid mixing different kinds of drugs.
- Avoid using alone. If that is not possible, call the Never Use Alone hotline (877-696-1996) or the SafeSpot overdose prevention hotline (800-972-0590).
- Always have naloxone nearby in case of an opioid overdose.
- Use in a place where it is not unsafe to be unconscious for a long time.