

# Xylazine

## Information on Exposure, Wounds, and Response



### The Facts

- The White House Drug Czar declared xylazine an 'Emerging Threat' on April 12, 2023
- Xylazine is an animal tranquilizer and **not approved** for use in humans
- Xylazine is **not** an opioid
- Xylazine has been found **primarily mixed with fentanyl or polydrugs**, complicating overdose response
- Xylazine **does not** respond to naloxone and there is no known reversal agent for humans

### Signs of Exposure

- Extreme sedation (unarousable for several hours at a time)
- Depressed breathing, not breathing, slow pulse, blue skin
- Severe skin wounds after repeated use

### Xylazine Wounds

- **Early-stage wounds** generally begin as a red or purple spot and grow over the first 24 hours into a bruise with irregular borders.
- **Intermediate-stage wounds** develop into quarter-/ half-dollar-size bruises, and their borders become round and regular. After time, the wound becomes deep and forms a calloused scab which does not heal.
- **Severe wounds** are characterized by visible flesh and/or bone and may require amputation without prompt medical attention.

**MOST IMPORTANT TAKEAWAY:** It is possible to prevent early-stage and intermediate-stage wounds from becoming severe by keeping them:

- **CLEAN** (using soap and water; avoid alcohol and hand sanitizer)
- **MOIST** (i.e. vaseline, A+D ointment, etc.)
- **COVERED** (using any bandage materials: i.e. bandaids, coban wrap, etc.)

### The Response

- **Overdose Response**
  - **Always administer naloxone during a suspected overdose**
    - Give a dose every 2-3 minutes until breathing resumes to ~10 breaths per minute. If breathing resumes but they remain unconscious, they may have been exposed to xylazine.
  - **Once normal breathing resumes**, place them in the side recovery position and find someone to stay with them until they regain consciousness, as they are at heightened risk for assault, robbery, etc.
- **Community Response**
  - **Begin testing for xylazine in your community or find out who does**
  - **Make this a collaborative response between public safety and public health agencies**
    - Find out who provides wound care, who can supervise individuals that are sedated due to xylazine, and partner with them. Early treatment of wounds will save people's limbs and providing connections to treatment and care will save lives.