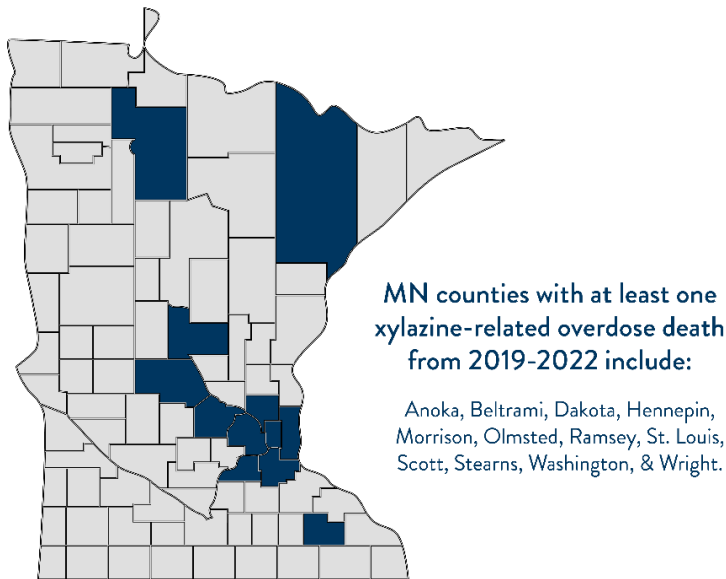


Xylazine in Minnesota

Xylazine, also called “Tranq” or “Tranq Dope,” is a powerful veterinary sedative increasingly found mixed with fentanyl in the illicit drug supply. **Using xylazine in combination with opioids like fentanyl increases risk of overdose and death.** Xylazine also causes life-threatening skin ulcers, abscesses, and wounds that can lead to infection and amputation.

MN Counties Reporting Xylazine-Related Overdose Deaths, 2019-2022



*Data from 2022 is preliminary and subject to change.

Xylazine-involved overdose deaths in Minnesota are relatively low compared to some states, but they are increasing at an alarming rate.

The first known xylazine-involved overdose death in Minnesota occurred in 2019. Since then, the number of xylazine-involved deaths has increased every year.

In 2019, there were four overdose deaths involving xylazine, followed by eight in 2020 and 24 in 2021.

Preliminary 2022 data shows there were 34 xylazine-involved deaths across the state.

Minnesota counties with at least one xylazine-related death from 2019-2022 include: Anoka, Beltrami, Dakota, Hennepin, Morrison, Olmsted, Ramsey, St. Louis, Scott, Stearns, Washington, and Wright.

In total, there were **70** reported xylazine-related overdose deaths in Minnesota from 2019 to 2022. Toxicology testing shows that fentanyl was present in 100% of xylazine-related deaths.

National Response to Xylazine

The full national scope of overdose deaths involving xylazine is not known, but research indicates that xylazine first entered the drug supply in the Northeast before spreading across the United States, where it has now been found in 48 states.

In April 2023, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy designated the combination of xylazine and fentanyl in the illicit drug supply as an emerging threat to the nation. This announcement included the creation of a whole government plan intended to increase xylazine testing, improve data systems, advance rapid research, develop treatment and care protocols, and reduce the illicit supply of xylazine nationwide.

Harm Reduction: Protect Yourself from Xylazine

Syringe service programs are harm reduction organizations that can help you stay safe. To see what services are offered near you, visit [MDH's Syringe Services Programs Calendar \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/syringe/calendar.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/syringe/calendar.html).

Xylazine prolongs the fast-acting effects of fentanyl, which gives people who use it more time to secure another dose before withdrawal symptoms begin. However, the risks that come with xylazine are profound, and anyone who uses opioids or any illicit substances must take care to protect themselves with the following steps:



Always administer naloxone.

The opioids that xylazine is combined with will respond to naloxone. In the event of a suspected overdose, administer naloxone every time, no matter what. To find some, use [the Minnesota Naloxone Finder \(https://knowthedangers.com/naloxone-finder/\)](https://knowthedangers.com/naloxone-finder/).



Test your drugs.

Xylazine test strips and fentanyl test strips can detect xylazine and fentanyl in drugs. These test strips are available online or from local harm reduction organizations listed on the [MDH Syringe Services Program Calendar \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/syringe/calendar.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/syringe/calendar.html).



Ask yourself: "Was that tranq?"

Many people who use xylazine are likely not aware they are taking it, but some may deliberately use it to extend an opioid high. Unlike fentanyl alone, xylazine often causes severe memory loss and unconsciousness for long periods of time. While people who regularly use opioids are often able to work or perform essential day-to-day tasks, the same is not true about xylazine, which can make it far more difficult to function.



Don't use drugs alone.

The extreme sedative power of xylazine significantly increases the chance that someone under its influence will lose consciousness for long periods. If this happens to someone in an unsafe environment, they may be abused, robbed, or taken advantage of in other ways. Whenever possible, never use alone or in the presence of people you do not trust. If you do use alone, first call the ["Never Use Alone" 24 hour hotline 800-484-3731 \(https://neverusealone.com/\)](https://neverusealone.com/).



Take care of your wounds.

Xylazine use dramatically increases the risk of developing serious wounds, both at injection sites and elsewhere on and inside the body. What may start out as track marks can turn into life-threatening wounds that result in amputations, infections, or death. Do not wait to seek medical attention for wounds or track marks. Every day counts.



Watch out for withdrawal.

Xylazine withdrawal is different than opioid withdrawal, and there are far fewer options available to treat it. Symptoms of withdrawal from xylazine include extreme anxiety that can last for months. Opioid withdrawal symptoms can be treated with medications like methadone and buprenorphine, but xylazine withdrawal symptoms cannot be treated with these medications.

References

[Biden-Harris Administration Designates Fentanyl Combined with Xylazine as an Emerging Threat to the United States \(https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/briefing-room/2023/04/12/biden-harris-administration-designates-fentanyl-combined-with-xylazine-as-an-emerging-threat-to-the-united-states/\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/briefing-room/2023/04/12/biden-harris-administration-designates-fentanyl-combined-with-xylazine-as-an-emerging-threat-to-the-united-states/)

[Xylazine poisoning: a systematic review \(https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35442125/\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35442125/)

[The Growing Threat of Xylazine and its Mixture with Illicit Drugs \(https://www.dea.gov/documents/2022/2022-12/2022-12-21/growing-threat-xylazine-and-its-mixture-illicit-drugs\)](https://www.dea.gov/documents/2022/2022-12/2022-12-21/growing-threat-xylazine-and-its-mixture-illicit-drugs)

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