

Carroll County Health Department Adulterant Alert

The Health Department is aware of two adulterants being mixed with street drugs in addition to Xylazine and Fentanyl: Medetomidine, and Etomidate, both found in Philadelphia. Often the drug trends seen in Philadelphia spread down the east coast to Maryland.

Through the [Rapid Analysis of Drugs](#) program in Maryland, notable increases in samples with medetomidine have been found. In an abundance of caution, we want to make sure that our community is aware that Medetomidine has the potential to be found locally.

Medetomidine Highlights

- Medetomidine is a veterinary sedative (*alpha-2 agonist*) that is more potent than xylazine.
- Medetomidine may be linked to symptoms of hypotension (*low blood pressure*), bradycardia (*low heart rate*), and prolonged sedation that is not reversed by naloxone.
- All samples that were found to contain medetomidine in Philadelphia also contained xylazine and fentanyl.
- It is not clear if medetomidine causes wounds similar to those associated with xylazine.

Withdrawal

- Individuals may report symptoms of withdrawal from medetomidine. These symptoms may be responsive to clonidine, a similar alpha-2 agonist.
- Withdrawal management should prioritize treating opioid withdrawal with buprenorphine or methadone and add clonidine early for patients who are hemodynamically stable and have persistent symptoms.

Etomidate Highlights

- Etomidate is a short-acting sedative used in emergency and critical care medicine.
- Like other anesthetics, the clinical effects of etomidate primarily include sedation and unconsciousness. Etomidate may also cause nausea and vomiting.
- Etomidate may increase mortality in patients with sepsis and may increase the risk of respiratory depression when used together with opioids.
- Etomidate usually takes effect within one minute, and the effects last from three to five minutes.

Withdrawal

- Etomidate is a GABA agonist (similar to benzodiazepines) so withdrawal management for chronic etomidate use may follow similar protocols for benzodiazepine withdrawal.
- All samples that tested positive for etomidate also contained fentanyl, so withdrawal management should prioritize treatment of opioid withdrawal with methadone and buprenorphine.

Overdose Response

- Naloxone should always be administered as the first step when responding to a drug overdose.
- Medetomidine (like Xylazine) may cause prolonged sedation, which emphasizes the importance of rescue breathing, placing an individual in the rescue position, and monitoring breathing after administering naloxone.

- Etomidate has a rapid onset and duration, but other sedatives found in the drug supply (e.g., xylazine, medetomidine, benzodiazepine) may cause prolonged sedation.
- Administer one dose of naloxone every two minutes. Once individuals are breathing on their own (*taking a minimum of one breath every six seconds*). They no longer require more naloxone.
- Always call 911 for medical assistance when responding to an overdose.
- Additional instructions on overdose response can be found at harmreduction.org/issues/overdose-prevention/overview/overdose-basics/responding-to-opioid-overdose.

For more information about each adulterant, please see the [Harm Reduction page](#) on the [Carroll County Health Department website](#).

If you are a person who uses drugs or if you know someone who does, please use/encourage safer use.

- "Slow & Low," use less and inject slowly
- Test your drugs!
 - Fentanyl and Xylazine test strips are available at the Health Department
- Don't use alone
 - Download the Brave App (brave.coop/overdose-detection-app) or call Never Use Alone (1-877-696-1996)
- Have Naloxone nearby
 - Learn how to get Naloxone at no cost here: [Carroll County Health Department](#)

Help is available:

- Call or text 988 for 24/7 crisis assistance
- Carroll County Health Department can help you find additional options, at 410-876-4449 (M-F, 8 am-5 pm)

Thank you,

The Harm Reduction Team
Bureau of Prevention, Wellness and Recovery
410-876-4449