



County of Santa Cruz



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY Public Health Division

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS WARN OF AN INCREASE OF XYLAZINE FOUND IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA – County of Santa Cruz Public Health Officials are warning local clinicians and residents of an increase of xylazine in the illegal drug supply in Santa Cruz County. Xylazine, when combined with fentanyl, is known as “tranq dope.” Xylazine is a powerful sedative intended for animals as a pain reliever. It is not safe for humans and can cause drowsiness, amnesia, serious skin wounds, as well as slow breathing, lower heart rate, and a decrease in blood pressure to dangerous levels that can lead to death.

“Xylazine is increasingly being mixed into street drugs, leading to a higher risk of overdose and serious health complications,” said Dr. Lisa Hernandez, County of Santa Cruz Health Officer. “The safest approach is to avoid using street drugs. Stay as safe as possible: never use alone, recognize the signs of overdose, seek help, and stay informed.”

Xylazine is often mixed with opioids like fentanyl and heroin without the knowledge of those who use these drugs. Although xylazine overdose is not reversed by naloxone, the life-saving medication should still be administered to people experiencing overdose to reverse the opioid component of the overdose. Call 911 and provide rescue breathing if needed. If xylazine is present, the individual may still be very drowsy even after receiving naloxone.

Drugs that have xylazine present are also more likely to cause infections, abscesses, or ulcers. These wounds commonly occur at injection sites, but any method of xylazine use increases the risk for serious skin wounds. See a medical provider immediately if you have a wound from using xylazine; keep it clean and covered to avoid infection.

Naloxone is approved by the federal government for over-the-counter distribution at pharmacies and is available for free from many community sites. See www.hipscc.org/naloxone for a list of naloxone distribution sites.

People who are ready to seek treatment for substance use can contact their primary care provider or call the Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health Division at (800) 952-2335.

To find out more about xylazine, visit [CDPH's xylazine website](#) or SafeRx [Santa Cruz County](#) for local resources.

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