

Nitazenes: Overdose Risks & Harm Reduction

What are Nitazenes?

- ▶ Nitazenes are powerful synthetic opioids. **Some can be up to 500x stronger than heroin.**
- ▶ **All nitazenes act much faster than other opioids. Because of their dangerous potency, nitazenes have never been approved for medical use.**
- ▶ Illegally produced nitazenes have been found mixed into many street drugs, including MDMA, heroin, cocaine, benzos, ketamine, and fentanyl.
- ▶ **There is NO known “safe dose” of nitazenes. The strength and purity of nitazenes can vary, even in the same batch.**
- ▶ Nitazenes greatly increase risk of overdose and death – **always carry naloxone!**
- ▶ **Fentanyl test strips CANNOT detect nitazenes.**

Signs of a nitazene (opioid) overdose:

Nitazene is an opioid, and signs of opioid overdose include:

- ▶ Difficulty breathing
 - ▶ Some people who take nitazenes will suddenly stop breathing, often within minutes of taking drugs
- ▶ Snoring or shallow breathing
- ▶ Pinpoint pupils
- ▶ Cold and clammy skin and low body temperature
- ▶ Bluish or grey colour in skin and nails due to low oxygen
- ▶ Confusion, drowsiness, loss of consciousness, or falling into a coma

Because Nitazenes are much stronger than other opioids, overdose can occur more quickly and additional naloxone may be required to reverse a Nitazene overdose.



How can people who use drugs reduce their risk of overdose?

- ▶ When **using a new batch**, or drugs obtained from a **new supplier, do not use high doses.**
- ▶ **If you haven't used recently, use slowly.** Opioid tolerance goes away quickly, sometimes after only a few days. This is why people who use after leaving incarceration or treatment are at higher risk of overdose. **First-time opioid users and people who have taken a break from drug use** have a higher risk of fatal overdose, because they use more than their body can take.
- ▶ **Do not mix nitazene or other opioids with other drugs**, particularly depressants such as alcohol, sleeping pills, benzodiazepines, antidepressants, ketamine, or GHB (G, Liquid Ecstasy).
- ▶ In times of extreme heat, minimize mixing substances or use less frequently.
- ▶ **Do not use alone.** Call your overdose prevention lifeline, “**Never Use Alone,**” at **877-696-1996.** <https://neverusealone.com>
 - ▶ A volunteer operator will take your location information and alert EMS if you stop responding after using.
 - ▶ **All calls are confidential.** No one will ever know you called, and information won’t be shared with anyone other than EMS if they need to be alerted.

Always carry naloxone!

If you don't use opioids yourself, you could save the life of someone who does.

Where to find naloxone:

State-wide pharmacy	Naloxone is available over the counter at most major pharmacies—no prescription needed. Contact your local pharmacy for details.
<u>Sonoran Prevention Works</u>	Offers free naloxone, fentanyl test strips, and other harm-reduction supplies through mail order and local distribution across Arizona.
<u>Substance Awareness Coalition Leaders of AZ</u>	Connects people across Arizona to free naloxone, training, and local distribution sites.
<u>National Harm Reduction Coalition</u>	Helps people find local harm-reduction services nationwide, including naloxone distribution.

Are you ready to stop using Opioids? Do you have questions about Opioids?



Call the free, confidential, Opioid Assistance and Referral Line (OAR Line) at 1-888-688-4222.

Local medical experts offer patients, providers, and family members opioid information, resources, and referrals 24/7. Translation services are available.

Any question. Any concern. Any time.

Responding to an Opioid-Related Emergency

Call 911 and Give Naloxone. If they are still unresponsive after 3 minutes, give a second dose of naloxone.

**Give rescue breaths or perform CPR, if needed.
Follow 911 Dispatcher instructions.**

After naloxone, stay with the person for at least three hours or until help arrives.

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ADHS acknowledges the serious health risks and negative impacts of drug use. Substance use disorders are complex, chronic conditions as outlined in the DSM-IV. Occasional relapse/return to use is not uncommon during recovery.

ADHS does not promote drug use but aims to reduce fatalities from drug overdose. The information provided offers practical guidance to help minimize risk and prioritize safety until individuals are ready to stop using. Assistance is available. Recovery is possible. Call 1-888-688-4222.



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Center for Rural Health