



Nitazene-type drugs in Scotland

There is an increase in the availability of a new type of synthetic opioid drugs called nitazenes. They are also known as 2-benzyl benzimidazole opioids.

Due to their unexpected presence in the drug supply and high potency, nitazenes pose a substantial risk of overdose, hospitalisation and death.

PHS strongly recommends people do not take non-prescribed oxycodone tablets.

Cascade alert to: people working in drug and alcohol services, emergency services, health care settings and high-risk settings inc. prisons.

Nitazene mis-sold as oxycodone.

Photo credit:
WEDINOS, W026272



This alert applies to all of Scotland.

There have been multiple detections in Lothian, Grampian and Greater Glasgow and Clyde, in both communities and custodial settings.

Nitazenes detected in Scotland include:

- **N-pyrrolidino-etomidazepine (etomidazepine or NPE)**
- **metomidazepine**
- **protonitazene**

Most detections fall into one of two groups:

- in **counterfeit tablets** mis-sold as oxycodone. Usually blue stamped with half score, '30' and 'M'.
- in white **paper/blotter** form mainly in prison seizures.

Opioid harm reduction advice applies to nitazenes, with greater vigilance advised due to the potency.

- **Test before use.** Use the drug testing service www.wedinos.org
- **Dose low.** Take a test dose (small part of pill/paper).
- **Go slow.** Leave as long as possible between doses.
- **Avoid mixing drugs** including alcohol and medicines. This increases the risk of overdose.
- **Use in company.** Stay with people who can respond in an emergency.

Naloxone is a life-saving medicine that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.

- Naloxone should be given to anyone who is unresponsive and displaying the signs of an overdose (snoring, difficulty breathing, pin-point pupils, blue lips).
- Due to the potency of nitazenes, multiple doses of naloxone may be required before the overdose is reversed.
- Doses should be administered one at a time, waiting 2 to 3 minutes between each dose.
- Get naloxone from your local drug service or order online from www.sfad.org.uk

In an emergency

Always get help quickly - stay calm, call 999 and ask for an ambulance. Give as much information as you can and be honest about what was taken.

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Contact

To make a report or find out more visit www.publichealthscotland.scot/RADAR or email psh.drugsradar@psh.scot