MEDETOMIDINE

(meh-deh-TOH-mih-deen)

what is it?

- a strong non-opioid animal sedative & tranquilizer similar to xylazine (tranq) but *much* stronger- as much as 100-200x stronger in some cases
- a central nervous system (CNS) depressant, stronger than most people are expecting their bag to be
- currently emerging as a cut in the street dope supply in NJ - including here in New Brunswick, other parts of Middlesex County, and in markets across NJ

participants who've used dope cut with medetomidine experienced:

- instantly falling asleep or unable to stay awake
- long-lasting heavy sedation, confusion, dizziness
- hallucinations and feeling physically stuck but mentally present - described as *"sleep paralysis"* and *"a waking dream"*
- increase in urination (dehydration risk)
- muscle twitches, erratic body movements
- shortness of breath or slowed breathing
- significant drops in blood pressure and heart rate

withdrawal risks

- **life threatening** increase in heart rate & blood pressure
- tremors
- nausea
- uncontrollable vomiting
- excessive sweating
- confusion, or "not knowing you're awake"
- **seek hospital care urgently if any of these symptoms present**

NJHRC staff can support with referrals and transportation if you are considering in-patient detox, and provide a detox protocol card to show doctors

overdose response:

- **if you think someone is overdosing :**
  - respond with rescue breaths & naloxone like normal
  - **give rescue breaths before naloxone**, and try to get them breathing

- if still not breathing give **1 low-dose of naloxone**
- right after naloxone dose, **give rescue breaths for 2-4 minutes** or until they are breathing
- if not breathing after 4 minutes, give 2nd naloxone dose and repeat rescue breathing
- **WHEN THE PERSON BEGINS TO BREATHE ON THEIR OWN, YOU GAVE ENOUGH NALOXONE!**
- move them into the **Recovery Position** and monitor breathing until they wake up
  - massage/squeeze their arms & legs to prevent muscle atrophy
- when they're awake: sit them up slowly and encourage them to take it easy for 30-90 minutes until the naloxone wears off and their opioid receptors open back up

harm reduction tips

- get your drugs checked - knowing what you're using helps you know how to stay safe while using
- be mindful of your tolerance and any tolerance changes (just left jail, hospital, rehab, using less overall)
- carry naloxone and be confident in how to use it, including rescue breathing!
- if you know or think there's medetomidine in your drugs, try not to use alone - unpredictable heavy sedation can leave you vulnerable if alone
- if using in a group, take turns and spot each other
- share this info with your friends and make a safety plan in case of overdose or unwanted sedation

Did you know you can now have your drugs checked for medetomidine & other cuts at NJHRC's Community Drug Checking Program? Available Tuesdays & Thursdays 12-5pm at our New Brunswick Harm Reduction Center text Caitlin at 848-800-2142 for more information or to set up a sample drop-off

new jersey harm reduction coalition