

Indiana Emerging Drug Notification

Emerging Drug Threat in Indiana: N-pyrrolidino etonitazene



May 15, 2023

Summary

The Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) is alerting law enforcement, first responders, clinicians, and public health professionals about an emerging drug called N-pyrrolidino etonitazene. Also known by its street names, “Pyro” and “M30,” the substance is a powerful synthetic opioid about 10 times stronger than fentanyl and between 1,000 to 1,500 times stronger than morphine. This substance has been detected in a counterfeit drug product in Indiana.

Background

The Center for Forensic Science Research & Education’s NPS Discovery program first reported N-pyrrolidino etonitazene in the United States in May 2021. On April 12, 2022, the DEA temporarily placed N-pyrrolidino etonitazene on the list of Schedule I controlled substances. In addition, several states placed the substance into their respective controlled substance schedules including Florida, Louisiana, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota and Wyoming. While Indiana did introduce a bill in 2022 to place N-pyrrolidino etonitazene on the list of Schedule I controlled substances, the bill was not passed before the end of legislative session.

N-pyrrolidino etonitazene has been confirmed in 21 blood samples and one urine sample from 21 post-mortem cases, of which 17 were in the United States. In all cases, additional substances were found in conjunction with N-pyrrolidino etonitazene including fentanyl and benzodiazepines. The substance has appeared in at least New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Florida, and Colorado. In February 2023, N-pyrrolidino etonitazene was detected in Westfield, Indiana. Following two fatal and two nonfatal overdoses related to the drug in Hamilton County, Indiana, the Westfield Police Department Issued a warning to the public about the dangers of the substance.

N-pyrrolidino etonitazene has chemical properties that resemble nitazenes. Unlike other identified nitazenes, the substance is not mentioned in medical literature or patents, indicating the drug was likely developed independently from the pharmaceutical industry. The substance may be found in liquid or yellow powder form and is often pressed into counterfeit pills. N-pyrrolidino etonitazene is nearly identical to fentanyl in appearance, being light blue in color, with dark specks scattered throughout the pill. The Welsh Emerging Drugs and Identification of Novel Substances indicated the presence of the substance within “M30” pills sold as oxycodone.

Relevant Data

N-pyrrolidino etonitazene is on the IDOH testing panel; however, no positive results were found in Indiana as of March 2023. As there is no timeline for coroners to request toxicology testing, numbers may change as results are received. The Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) also utilizes syndromic surveillance to monitor near-real time emergency department data for overdose-related visits. There was one mention of N-pyrrolidino etonitazene within the chief complaint and triage notes of a patient health record.

IDOH also participates in the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS), that reports data from death certificates and medical examiner or coroner reports on deaths related to unintentional drug overdose and those of undetermined intent. As of Dec. 31, 2022, N-pyrrolidino etonitazene was not found in the SUDORS database. Due to the potential for individuals to unknowingly overdose on this substance, and a lack of toxicology testing in emergency department settings, this may undercount the number of overdoses involving the substance.

Overdose Signs and Symptoms

Although little is known about the toxicity of N-pyrrolidino etonitazene, its presence in toxicology cases within the United States and its association with fatal and nonfatal drug overdoses in Indiana, suggests that the substance could cause harm and may pose a serious public health threat. The reported effects after N-pyrrolidino etonitazene use include euphoria, drowsiness, itchiness, nausea and/or vomiting, sweating and difficulty breathing.

Similar to other opioids, N-pyrrolidino etonitazene may cause fatal respiratory depression in the person who has ingested the substance. However, because N-pyrrolidino etonitazene is an opioid, naloxone can be used to reverse an overdose.

Signs and symptoms of an overdose may include troubled breathing; small pupils; unconsciousness or unresponsiveness; snoring, choking, or gurgling; cold or clammy skin; pale or blue skin; and discolored lips or fingernails. Due to its potency, an individual who has overdosed on this substance may require multiple doses of naloxone to reverse critical respiratory depression. If an overdose is suspected, call 911 and administer naloxone right away, if available.

Obtaining Naloxone

IDOH has two grant opportunities open for qualified agencies to receive Opioid Rescue Kits in the form of Narcan nasal spray. The first opportunity is available to any local health department (LHD) in the state of Indiana. The application for this grant as well as the grant announcement can be found here: <https://redcap.isdh.in.gov/surveys/?s=M9T4N3A3HCNFI3XP>. The other opportunity is for Rural First Responder Agencies, such as police, EMS, corrections, and/or fire departments. This grant is available to first responders in 62 of Indiana's counties. The application to this grant, including a copy of the grant announcement, can be found here: <https://redcap.isdh.in.gov/surveys/?s=KJFP4XLD4HDC74W9>. If you have any questions about the naloxone grant opportunities at IDOH, please email Naloxone Program Manager Laura Hollowell at LHollowell@health.in.gov.

Additionally, as of March 29, naloxone can now be purchased at all pharmacies as an over-the-counter medication. Indiana also has a [standing order](#) in place, signed by IDOH Chief Medical Officer Dr. Lindsay Weaver in 2023, so all Indiana residents can purchase naloxone without a prescription.

Lastly, to obtain naloxone you may visit [OptIN.in.gov](https://optin.in.gov) and use the "Find Naloxone Entity" tab to find naloxone providers. Registered OptIN entities, such as treatment centers, overdose prevention organizations, community corrections facilities, pharmacies and local health departments, have naloxone doses available for distribution.



Resources

- Additional IDOH Overdose Data can be found at <https://www.in.gov/health/overdose-prevention/overdose-surveillance/indiana/>
- Additional IDOH Naloxone information can be found at <https://www.in.gov/health/overdose-prevention/naloxone/>
- CDC Opioid resources can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/opioids/index.html>
- Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association, N-pyrrolidino etonitazene fact sheet - [Pyro Fact Sheet](#)
- The Center for Forensic Science Research and Education, Novel Psychoactive Substances Toolkit, N-pyrrolidino etonitazene - [N-Pyrrolidino Etonitazene NPS Discovery Toolkit.pdf](#)

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