

DRUG WARNING

Nitazenes found in counterfeit oxycodone tablets in NSW

Know the risks

- Nitazenes, such as N-desethyl isotonitazene, are synthetic opioids that are stronger and may be longer acting than many other opioids. They are up to 500 times more potent than heroin.
- Fake oxycodone or 'OxyContin' tablets may contain nitazenes or other unexpected drugs. They may have incorrect or no markings, be poorly made, powdery, or lack film coating.
- Nitazenes are dangerous and vary in strength – some nitazenes are so potent that there is no safe dose. The purity can also vary within a single batch.
- Nitazene use has been linked to death and other serious harms in NSW.
- The risks of overdose are increased if you:
 - Use drugs alone.
 - Use nitazenes or other opioids if you have not used them before.
 - Use drugs again after a break.
 - Use with other drugs (like alcohol, benzodiazepines, ketamine, or GHB).
 - Use a new batch.
- Naloxone can temporarily reverse an overdose from opioids. Nitazenes may require repeated doses of naloxone. Always ring an ambulance. The effects of naloxone may wear off, and ongoing doses and hospital treatment may be needed.
- Fentanyl test strips **do not** detect nitazenes.

Effects to look out for

- Pinpoint pupils, drowsiness, loss of consciousness, slow breathing/snoring or skin turning blue/grey.
- If you or others experience these symptoms, **get help immediately**.

Getting help

If you or your friends see the warning signs of overdose:

Seek help immediately from your nearest emergency department or call **Triple Zero (000)**. You won't get into trouble for seeking medical care.

Start CPR if someone is not responsive.

Use naloxone if you have it. Call '000' even if naloxone has been given.



Counterfeit (fake) oxycodone tablets have been found to contain N-desethyl isotonitazene. This is the first detection of this substance in a drug sample in NSW.

The tablets are green, round, marked 'OC' on the front and '80' on the reverse, and lack film coating. Legitimate Oxycontin is now marked 'ON' instead of 'OC' and has a film coating.

Tablet appearance is not a reliable indicator of drug contents. Image NSW Health



Take Home Naloxone Program

- **Naloxone** is a life-saving medicine that can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. Naloxone is available in a very easy to use nasal spray and as a pre-filled injection.
- You should carry naloxone if:
 - You are using drugs such as cocaine, ketamine, methamphetamine, MDMA, or opioids.
 - You are hosting or going to a party where drugs will be present.
- If you might experience or witness an opioid overdose you can get **naloxone for free without a prescription in NSW** from many community pharmacies, needle & syringe programs, opioid treatment services and NUAA.
- Visit [Your Room](#) for participating sites and more information on take-home naloxone.
- NUAA can mail you naloxone in a discreet package. Order via their online shop: shop.nuaa.org.au or call (02) 9171 6650.

Support and advice

For free and confidential advice:

- Call [Alcohol and Drug Information Service](#) (ADIS) on 1800 250 015 at any time 24/7. Start a [Web Chat](#) with an ADIS counsellor Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5pm.
- Call [NUAA](#) on 1800 644 413 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) to speak to a peer or visit [NUAA](#) for a range of resources.
- Call the [NSW Poisons Information Centre](#) on 13 11 26 for information on adverse effects from drugs.
- Visit Your Room for [a fact sheet on nitazenes](#).



For up to date alerts, visit <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/drugalerts>
Issued 28 March 2025 © NSW Health.
SHPN (CAOD) 250307.

