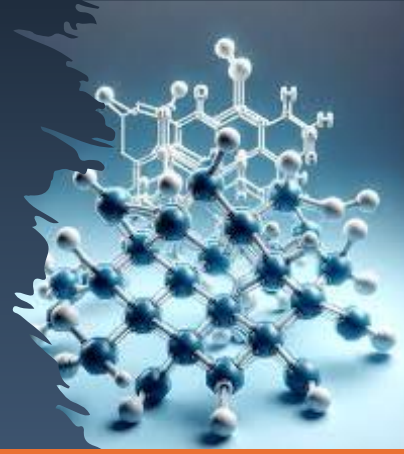


# Nitazenes: A Simple Guide



## What Are Nitazenes?

Nitazenes are strong synthetic opioids that mimic natural opioids like morphine and heroin. They are extremely potent and pose a high risk of overdose.

## Why Are Nitazenes a Concern?

### Potency:

Nitazenes are much stronger than traditional opioids (such as heroin, morphine, oxycodone, etc.), so even a small amount can lead to overdose.

### Illicit Use:

These substances are not medically approved and are often found in illicit drugs. It is very difficult to know whether nitazenes are present in the drugs purchased through the illicit market. For example, nitazenes may be mixed with other drugs, significantly increasing the risks of overdose including in substances other than opioids such as cocaine, ketamine, MDMA, synthetic cannabinoids and products sold as other opioid tablets (i.e. fake oxycodone tablets).

### Health Risks:

There is a significant risk of respiratory depression (slowed or stopped breathing) that can lead to overdose and possibly, death. If used for extended periods, nitazenes like other opioids can lead to dependence and withdrawal symptoms.

# What Do Nitazenes Look Like?

Nitazenes usually come as a white, crystalline powder, but can sometimes be more of a brown/yellow powder. As noted above, nitazenes can be mixed with other drugs and can also be in tablets or liquids.



# What Are Some Common Nitazenes?

Some common nitazenes include:

|                      |
|----------------------|
| <b>Protonitazene</b> |
| <b>Isotonitazene</b> |
| <b>Etonitazene</b>   |
| <b>Metonitazene</b>  |
| <b>Etonitazepyne</b> |



It should be noted that the above list is not comprehensive and new nitazene analogues are continually being detected in Australia and in other countries.

# How Can You Stay Safe?

## Be Informed:

If you or someone you know is using illicit drugs, stay informed on the latest harm reduction information by keeping up with drug alerts (see resources below).

## Practice Harm Reduction:

If using opioids, try not to use alone. Where available, use pill testing/drug checking services as a precaution.

## Always Carry Naloxone:

Naloxone can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Naloxone is available free of charge, with no identification needed, at Needle & Syringe Programs (NSPs) and many pharmacies across Australia.

## Emergency Response:

In case of an overdose, seek help immediately by calling an ambulance – dial 000. Naloxone can temporarily reverse opioid overdoses – follow the instructions and always monitor the person as multiple doses may be needed.



# Resources for Information

## Alerts

[https://www.instagram.com/p/C7GsZnWBgxc/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/p/C7GsZnWBgxc/?img_index=1)

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/drug-alerts/cocaine-adulterated-with-protonitazene>

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/public+health/alerts/health+alerts/protonitazene+contaminated+oxycodone>

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/public-drug-alerts/Pages/nitazenes-causing-severe-opioid-overdose-may2024.aspx>

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/public-drug-alerts/Pages/nitazenes-mdma-red-bull-Jan24.aspx>

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/aod/public-drug-alerts/Pages/heroin-nitazenes-apr24.aspx>

## Resources

**Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL):** [Nitazenes nitty-gritty: What are nitazenes? And why are they being found in heroin and ketamine in Australia?](#)

**Alcohol & Drug Foundation Factsheet:** <https://insight.qld.edu.au/news/new-adf-fact-sheet-nitazenes>

**Monash University:** <https://lens.monash.edu/@suzanne-nielsen/2024/06/15/1386663/opioids-more-potent-than-fentanyl-have-been-detected-in-australia-so-what-are-nitazenes>

**Right Now:** <https://rightnow.org.au/opinion/synthetic-opioids-more-dangerous-than-heroin-and-fentanyl/>

**Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation & Advocacy (CAHMA):** <https://www.cahma.org.au/article/safer-using-nitazenes/>

**QUIVAA – Hi-Ground:** <https://hi-ground.org/substances/nitazenes-2/>