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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Public Safety Alert About the Dangers of Xylazine



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody, Sarasota County Sheriff Kurt Hoffman and Florida Department of Law Enforcement Special Agent in Charge Eli Lawson today issued a public safety alert about the dangers of xylazine. During a news conference at the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office, the officials highlighted new statistics showing that xylazine is now the sixth-most identifiable illicit drug in Florida according to FDLE. News reports indicate xylazine is also more prevalent in overdose deaths in the Sarasota County area than other parts of the state—with 30 xylazine overdose deaths in 2021.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Xylazine mixed with fentanyl is complicating life-saving measures by first responders. When mixed with fentanyl, xylazine can make it difficult for first responders to administer life-saving treatment—as naloxone is ineffective on sedatives such as xylazine. In Florida, we have already outlawed this dangerous drug, but we are calling on the federal government to follow our lead and take action to reduce the supply of this dangerous substance and save lives.”

Sarasota County Sheriff Kurt A. Hoffman said, “We have confirmed through our detectives and laboratory personnel that Xylazine has been seized here in Sarasota County. The drug’s lack of a response to Narcan complicates law enforcement’s abilities when encountered. The Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office is partnering with Attorney General Ashley Moody to bring awareness and education of this horrific drug and the effects it has on the human body.”

FDLE Special Agent in Charge Eli Lawson said, “In 2021, xylazine was the 11th-most frequently identified drug in the FDLE crime labs. In 2023, so far, it is the sixth-most frequently present drug in processing drug-related evidence statewide. Since 2021, our FDLE crime labs across the

state have logged 1,090 cases of xylazine being present in processed evidence. This growing challenge is serious. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement is committed to continuing to partner with our local law enforcement agencies and the Attorney General's Office to disrupt the flow of dangerous drugs into Florida and to protect all those who live, work, and visit our state."

According to a [news report](#), in 2021, more than 230 Floridians died with xylazine in their systems. Sarasota County recorded the third highest number of deaths in Florida with this animal sedative present in the decedents' bodies. This year, FDLE lab analysts are identifying xylazine more than 55 times a month in their crime labs, up from 45 in 2022 and 32 in 2021. These statistics do not include xylazine identifications from other Florida crime labs. According to FDLE, in 2021, xylazine was the 11th-most frequently identified drug in FDLE crime labs. So far in 2023, it is the sixth-most frequently identified drug in processing drug-related evidence statewide. FDLE crime labs logged more than 1,000 cases of present xylazine since 2021.

Similar to fentanyl, xylazine is commonly mixed with other drugs, and sold to unsuspecting users—often with deadly consequences.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), there are a record number of drug overdose deaths in the U.S., with more than 107,000 in 2021, largely due to synthetic opioids like fentanyl. According to FDLE Medical Examiner's Annual Reports, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties saw 246 overdose deaths due to fentanyl in 2021, a 485% increase since 2016.

Attorney General Moody [first warned](#) about xylazine heading into the spring break season. Following the warning, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration issued a [public safety alert](#) highlighting the increasing amount of xylazine mixed with fentanyl. According to the alert, authorities seized xylazine-fentanyl mixtures in 48 of 50 states. The DEA Laboratory System is reporting that 23% of fentanyl powder seized by the DEA in 2022 contained xylazine.

[Last week](#), Attorney General Moody called on the DEA to follow Florida's lead and add xylazine to the federal list of controlled substances. Florida outlawed the substance in 2016.

Attorney General Moody has called on the Biden administration to stop the flow of illicit substances, like fentanyl, across the U.S.-Mexico border by following public safety immigration laws. Last month, Attorney General Moody's office [won](#) a major immigration case and federal court ruling, mandating that the Biden administration must follow the law.

Anyone struggling with substance-abuse issues should visit DoseOfRealityFL.com, a statewide resource with information for combating drug abuse. Those struggling with addiction can find treatment resources at TreatmentAtlas.org.