

Hello,

You are receiving this message as a part of Nova Scotia's Drug Harms Alert distribution list. We received a report with the following details.

This report came from community partner regarding powdered cocaine testing positive for xylazine. There were 5 instances of powdered cocaine testing positive for xylazine on February 1 and 2 in Sydney, NS.

Location/community of where the drug was used	Sydney, NS
Date and time when the drug was used	Feb 1 & 2, 2024
Name(s) of the drug (i.e. what was assumed to be used)	Cocaine
Description of the drug and its packaging	Powder
How the drug was used	Injection
Observed reaction of the drug used	Initial rush and then deep sedation, (heavy nod), some experiencing burning sensation when first injected and a rash.

No photo of the drug was available.

Please share through your communication networks (e.g. posters in your service locations, conversations with individual clients, social media posting, etc.).

Please also include the following harm reduction messages:

- *Don't use alone, if possible. Keep a distance of 2 meters and respect public health measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 if using substances with others.*
 - *Overdose Prevention Sites support harm reduction by providing equipment and a safe and caring space for people to use drugs. These sites are equipped to respond to overdoses and connect people to important health and social services.*
 - *ReFIX Halifax Overdose Prevention Site:
Address: 2107 Brunswick St. Halifax; Phone: 902-209-9370*
 - *PeerSix Overdose Prevention Site
Address: 75 Prince St. Sydney; Phone: 902-567-1766*
 - *If you are using alone, call the National Overdose Response Service (NORS) phone line at 1-888-688-NORS. It is a 24/7 phone line available for anyone in Canada to call and the operator will "spot" you while you use. For more information visit www.nors.ca.*

- *Alternatively, call a trusted support person and let them know you are using alone and provide them with your location.*
- *Start with a test dose. Start low, go slow.*
- *Have naloxone available, even if you aren't intentionally using opioids. Although naloxone only works to reverse opioid overdoses, there is no harm in administering it if you are unsure what kind of overdose you are witnessing. Naloxone is available for free from most community pharmacies and other community locations, including needle distribution and disposal organizations. For more information about where to get a free naloxone kit and how to use it, visit <http://www.nsnaloxone.com/>*
- *Call 911 in the event of an overdose. Know your rights under the [Good Samaritan Act](#).*

NOTE: This distribution list is designed to establish a flexible, low-barrier, community-driven process for communicating unexpected drug use-related harms observed in the community. Information in the alerts is not verified.

The purpose of this list is to receive and communicate community reports of overdose, suspected drug contamination, and other unexpected or elevated drug use-related harms. This list is intended for community-based organizations and health system services who provide front-line services to people who use drugs. If you have any questions, would like to join, or would like to unsubscribe from this list, please send an email to NSDrugAlert@nshealth.ca.

To submit a report, please send an email to NSDrugAlert@nshealth.ca with the subject line “Drug Alert”.

Please note that we also share our alert information with the St. John Ambulance Tainted Drug Supply early warning system, which shares and archives our alert information at a national level. You can see all St. John Ambulance alerts at [National Drug Alert System - Opioid Response and Nasal Naloxone Training | St. John Ambulance \(reactandreverse.ca\)](#)

Please include as much of the following information, as possible:

1. Location/community of where the drug was used
2. Date and time when the drug was used
3. Name(s) of the drug (i.e. what was assumed to be used/ what the drug was sold as)
4. Description of the drug and its packaging, especially anything unusual
5. How the drug was used
6. Observed reaction of the drug used, especially those that are unusual compared to the expected effect of the drug
7. Drug testing results (suspected composition of the drug)
8. Photo of the drug, if possible

Optional Information to submit with report:

As mentioned above, Nova Scotia Drug Harms Alert will also be submitted to the St. John Ambulance Tainted Drug Supply early warning system. There is an opportunity to report gender, ethnicity, and age of the individuals who have reported a tainted substance to an organization, with the individual's

consent. If individual has provided consent, please consider sending along any, or all of the following: age, ethnicity and/or gender.

- **Please note that this data (gender, ethnicity and age) is solely for internal use and is not reported to the general public.**
- This data is used to identify trends, and help to identify who may be at higher risk of experiencing drug poisoning due to factors such as age, gender, and race. It can assist in targeting harm reduction efforts and interventions to the groups that are most in need, as well as monitor the emergence of new patterns of drug use and create supports tailored to meet specific needs. The demographic information can be used to evaluate the impact of harm reduction interventions over time. By collecting data on the demographics of individuals who experience drug poisoning before and after an intervention, it is possible to assess the effectiveness of the intervention and make necessary changes.