



Opioid  
Response  
Network



# NITAZENE

This overview from **RTI International** is part of a series of reports developed for the *Opioid Response Network (ORN)* on emerging and trending topics of interest and importance to the addictions field. Briefs are intended to raise awareness and serve as a primer on the topic. **For locally meaningful education and training that is evidence based, on topics of importance to you and at no cost, visit [OpioidResponseNetwork.org](https://OpioidResponseNetwork.org).**

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## NITAZENE: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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- **Nitazenes make up a class of opioids estimated to be significantly more potent than fentanyl.**
  - The degree of potency ranges, with reported estimates being between 10 and as high as 43 times more potent than fentanyl.
  - This analog began to appear in the US in 2019 and is primarily derived from the Chinese market.
- **Concerns around nitazene include its growing presence in the US, as well as its potential interference on ongoing overdose response and addiction treatment efforts.**
- **Naloxone can reverse an overdose that involves nitazenes though it has been noted from field reports that multiple doses have been needed on occasion.**
  - It is recommended that anyone who overdoses on nitazene and is revived with naloxone seek medical treatment because the drug can be long-acting.

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## GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

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- Tennessee reported 42 fatal overdoses in 2021, an increase of 320% over the past year.
- Boulder County, Colorado reported at least two nitazene-related deaths in the past year.
- Ohio reported a 19% increase in nitazene-related cases in the first quarter of 2022.

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## RELATED ARTICLES/RESOURCES

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- [On the streets, opioids sometimes more potent than fentanyl: Nitazenes](#) (Washington Post, 12/10/2023)
- [Nitazenes—heralding a second wave for the UK drug-related death crisis?](#) (The Lancet, 12/12/2024)
- [What are nitazenes? What to know about the drug that can be 10 times as potent as fentanyl](#) (CBS News, 12/31/2023)
- [Notes from the Field: Nitazene-Related Deaths — Tennessee, 2019–2021](#) (CDC Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report, 9/16/2022)
- [What To Know About Nitazenes: Rare But Emerging Opioids More Potent Than Fentanyl](#) (Forbes, 1/2/2024)

Funding for this initiative was made possible (in part) by grant no. 1H79TI085588 from SAMHSA. The views expressed in written conference materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.