

Queensland Drug Warning

Emerging Drugs Network Australia (QLD)

Fake Xanax[®] tablets containing a strong opioid



There have been two recent deaths in Queensland related to the use of fake Xanax[®] tablets.

The counterfeit tablets contain **protonitazene** together with bromazolam, a benzodiazepine not available in Australia.

Protonitazene is a very strong opioid that works like heroin or fentanyl and can produce life-threatening toxicity in small amounts. Testing of different tablets from the same bottle indicated varying levels of protonitazene.

The counterfeit tablets do not have a score mark through the "N", which is present on Xanax[®] tablets. The tablets may be in labelled bottles that look genuine.



No score line on fake Xanax[®] tablets containing protonitazene



Score line on genuine Xanax[®] tablets (and many fake Xanax[®] tablets)

Toxic Effects

The toxic effects of protonitazene are similar to other opioids and include;

- Sedation
- Coma
- Slow or obstructed breathing
- Respiratory failure that can lead to death

These effects should respond to naloxone, and it should be used if available.

Information and Advice

Queensland Health advises that you **do not consume** counterfeit, fake or altered medications and substances. If you suspect you have these tablets please dispose of them safely.

Seek medical attention immediately if you or someone you know experiences any toxic effects following drug use.

For help:

- Call Triple Zero (000) for emergency assistance
- Go to your nearest emergency department
- Call the Queensland Poisons Information Centre (13 11 26)