**Drug alert**

**A pink and white capsule sold as ‘3C-P’ in Melbourne contains the potent opioid protonitazene.**

**Protonitazene is a novel synthetic opioid that can produce life-threatening toxic effects in very small amounts**

**Opioids** arecentral nervous system depressants, typically producing a range of effects including pain relief, sedation and respiratory depression (dangerously slow breathing). Respiratory depression often appears more quickly with **novel synthetic opioids** (NSOs), increasing the risk of life-threatening overdose.

**Protonitazene is an extremely potent NSO**, which means it can produce strong effects in very small amounts. Protonitazene has a potency **over 100 times** that of heroin.

**Be extremely cautious of any pink and white capsules or white powder sold as ‘3C-P’ or a psychedelic – it may contain protonitazene**

There has been one serious recent hospitalisation in Victoria associated with this pink and white capsule. The product appears to produce **strong adverse effects** such as loss of consciousness, respiratory depression, and life-threatening hypoxia (insufficient oxygen for normal functioning).

**3C-P and protonitazene are very different substances**. 3-CP produces stimulant and psychedelic effects, whereas protonitazene produces sedative effects and may lead to opioid toxicity. Usingprotonitazenewith depressants such asalcohol, GHB or benzodiazepines (‘Xanax’, ‘Valium’, etc) increases the risk of overdose**.**

**Signs of opioid toxicity** to look out for include breathing slowly and reduced consciousness (meaning someone is hard to wake up). In some cases, there may also be tiny pupils. More information about opioid overdose symptoms can be found on the [Penington Institute website](https://www.penington.org.au/between-us/between-us-overdose-and-naloxone/)**.**

**Naloxone** is an **easy-to-use medication** that can **reverse opioid overdose** – it’s safe to use even if you’re not sure whether someone has taken opioids. Naloxone can be accessed free of charge at participating **pharmacies**, **needle and syringe programs** and the **medically supervised injecting centre**. You can find an approved naloxone provider on the [Take Home Naloxone program website](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/aod-treatment-services/victorias-take-home-naloxone-program).

**Reduce the risk of harm**

If you experience adverse drug effects, or are present when someone has an unexpected reaction, **seek help immediately by calling Triple Zero (000)**.

All alcohol and other drug use comes with risks, so:

* **Be aware** that other false or contaminated drug products may circulate in Victoria, even if no specific warning has been issued about them.
* **Get free naloxone** and **carry it with you** – no matter what drugs you think you’re getting.
* Make sure you’re in a **safe environment with people you trust**.
* **Remember**, even ‘pure’ drugs can produce serious side effects and death, and can interact dangerously with medications/pharmaceutical drugs. Get the facts at: [adf.org.au/drug-facts/](https://adf.org.au/drug-facts/).

Contact **Harm Reduction Victoria’s DanceWize team** for anonymous support and education from peers. Talk to DanceWize volunteers by email at info@dancewize.org.au.

If you or someone you know needs help with alcohol or drug use, call DirectLine on 1800 888 236 or visit [directline.org.au](https://www.directline.org.au/) for information and support to access treatment.