



TIANEPTINE

What You Need To Know

What is Tianeptine?

Tianeptine is an atypical tricyclic antidepressant used in other countries to treat depression, but is not currently legally available in the United States. Sometimes referred to as “gas station heroin,” tianeptine has opioid agonist effects¹, which is a reason why some people may misuse this drug.

Tianeptine Effects

Outside of the United States, tianeptine can be prescribed to treat major depressive disorder. Some sources have also claimed that tianeptine can treat anxiety, depression, and addiction². Tianeptine is sometimes marketed as improving mood, energy, and sexual performance, as well as controlling appetite or muscle pain². However, there is clear evidence that tianeptine use has been shown to have serious health risks¹.

Tianeptine Street Names

Zaza • Tia • Tianna • Gas-station dope • Gas-station heroin • TD red • Pegasus

Common Side effects of tianeptine can include:

Nausea • Abdominal pain • Constipation • Headache • Agitation • Rapid heartbeat • High blood pressure • Drowsiness • Confusion • Difficulty breathing

Is Tianeptine legal?

In the U.S., tianeptine is not approved for medical or commercial use. Some states regulate tianeptine as a Schedule II controlled substance (similarly to morphine and fentanyl which have a high potential for abuse and can lead to severe psychological or physical dependence). Other states, such as Alabama, Tennessee, and Ohio, prohibit tianeptine as a Schedule I substance. The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) advises avoiding the drug³.

Tianeptine and Safety

Tianeptine can cause seizures, loss of consciousness and death. Tianeptine is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for any medical use and the FDA warns against buying or using tianeptine products.

How long does Tianeptine stay in your system?

Tianeptine stays in the body for a relatively short period. Most of it is eliminated from the body within 12 hours of ingestion. Tianeptine is not detected on routine urine drug screens. Since the drug is relatively short-acting, people who take tianeptine regularly can develop symptoms of withdrawal quickly.

What effects occur with Tianeptine use?

Several adverse effects have been reported with regular use and overdose of tianeptine. These include confusion or drowsiness, nausea, vomiting, abnormal electrolytes, seizures, high blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, as well as coma and stopping breathing². Several deaths have been associated with tianeptine overdose.

What should I do if someone I know has ingested Tianeptine?

If someone is having trouble breathing or is hard to wake up call 911. For less serious exposures (e.g., alert patients without depressed breathing), contact the Poison Control online tool and by phone at 1-800-222-1222 open 24/7.

To file a complaint:

To report tianeptine sold in unauthorized locations: The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) at 1(800) 495-3232.

For more information:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

<https://www.dea.gov/>

<https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/emerging-drug-trends>

<https://www.fda.gov/consumers/health-fraud-scams/tianeptine>

More information about public health services related to substance use in LA County is accessible through the Mobile-friendly RecoverLA platform: www.RecoverLA.org

Medi-Cal members can find substance use treatment services through the resources below:

- Services and Bed Availability Tool: <http://SUDHelpLA.org>
- Substance Abuse Service Helpline: 1-844-804-7500

References:

- (1) Edinoff et. al, 2023. Tianeptine, an Antidepressant with Opioid Agonist Effects: Pharmacology and Abuse Potential, a Narrative Review. *Pain Ther.* 2023 Oct; 12(5): 1121–1134. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10444703/>
- (2) <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/health-fraud-scams/tianeptine>
- (3) <http://www.cnn.com/2024/01/24/health/tianeptine-fda-warning/index.html>

Updated: 26JAN2026