



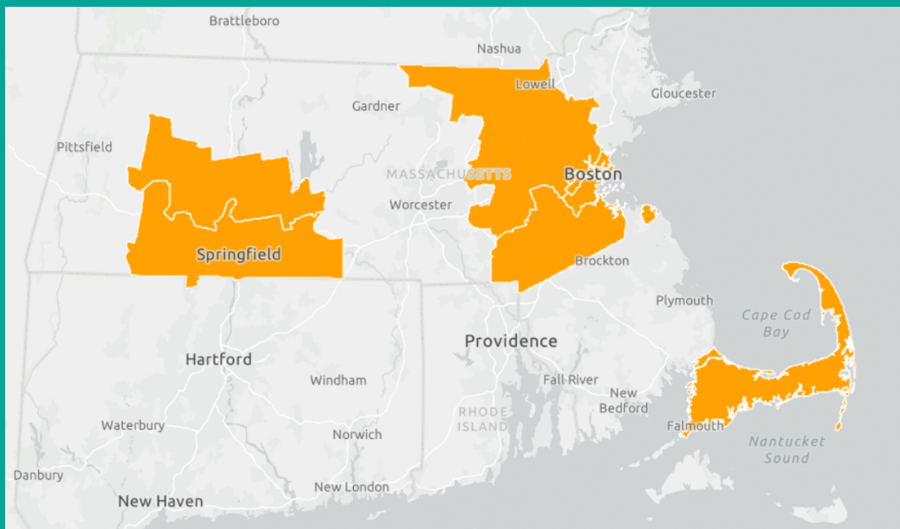
# Massachusetts Drug Supply Data Stream (MADDS) Drug Supply Update: Nitazenes (May 2024)

## Nitazenes are on the rise in Massachusetts

Nitazenes, a class of synthetic opioids not approved for human use, are being found in trace amounts across Massachusetts. Nitazenes were first identified in the United States in 2019 and have since been reported in the drug supply in places like Philadelphia, Rhode Island, Chicago, Ohio, and Washington DC.

Nitazenes are being found in powder and pill forms and most commonly sold as dope, fentanyl and heroin. In Massachusetts, some are weaker than fentanyl to up to 25 times stronger. It is common to find more than one nitazene in a single sample. They are also found mixed with fentanyl and xylazine. The number of samples tested by MADDS found to contain trace nitazenes was 6 in 2023 and 13 from January to May 2024.

### Nitazene Monitoring - Confirmed by Lab Testing



*StreetCheck data from January 2023 to May 2024 shows where we are seeing nitazene trends emerge in Massachusetts based on county of sample origin.*

*Nitazenes are a high strength adulterant in other drugs, primarily opioids. They vary in strength and can be up to 25 times stronger than fentanyl.*

*People may not know nitazenes are in their drugs. Mixing nitazenes into drugs already containing fentanyl increases overdose risk.*

*Naloxone can treat nitazene-related overdoses. Always give naloxone, give rescue breaths, and call 911. Nitazenes are strong and may need more naloxone and more rescue breaths.*

**Nitazenes can affect health:** Expect similar opioid effects and elevated risk for overdose when interacting with people using drugs with nitazenes in them. People report **more severe withdrawal symptoms** with a **faster onset**, **increased opioid tolerance**, and **increased risk of overdose** with nitazenes. Also reported are rashes, ear ringing, passing out, and feeling sick after using substances confirmed to have nitazenes in them.

**Give Naloxone (Narcan)** if overdose is suspected. Naloxone treats nitazene-related overdoses. You might need to use **more doses and do rescue breathing for longer** because nitazenes are strong. **Wait 2-3 minutes between each dose** of naloxone, and **give rescue breaths** in between. Always summon 911. High dose naloxone (containing >4mg of naloxone per unit) is not recommended. It is better to give smaller doses of naloxone and repeat if needed. There is **no evidence that nitazenes are resistant to naloxone**.