



## **Tianeptine: Alert for PA and DE from The Poison Control Center**

### Background:

Tianeptine is a drug being sold in gas stations and vape shops, and on the internet, in PA and DE. Popular brand names have been: “ZaZa”, “Neptune’s Fix”, and “Neptune’s Elixir”. It has also been sold in counterfeit pills that may look like prescription opioids. The media has nicknamed tianeptine as “gas station heroin.”

### Tianeptine Use:

Tianeptine is not approved for medical use in the United States. Currently, there are no statutes restricting sale of tianeptine in PA or DE. Tianeptine products in the U.S. may or may not contain tianeptine, and may contain other drugs. Tianeptine is prescribed to treat depression and anxiety in some European, African and South American sites. Tianeptine is medically complex and has action in many human nerve systems. At high doses, tianeptine has mu-opioid effects, so may be used to treat pain or treat opioid withdrawal.

### Tianeptine Toxicity – Recommendations for Healthcare Providers:

Please report suspected cases to The Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222). Consider naloxone for respiratory depression; obtain ECG; otherwise, care is supportive. An opioid withdrawal syndrome can occur when stopping use, and this merits treatment. Adverse events from tianeptine may be reported to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration: <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch/index.cfm>

### Other Resources:

- CFSRE. Emerging drug alert: Tianeptine. Center for Forensic Science Research & Education 2024 (Feb 6). Available at: [https://www.cfsre.org/images/content/reports/public\\_alerts/TIANEPTINE\\_Public\\_Health\\_Alert\\_Final.pdf](https://www.cfsre.org/images/content/reports/public_alerts/TIANEPTINE_Public_Health_Alert_Final.pdf)
- Counts CJ, Spadaro AV, Cerbini TA, et al. Notes from the field: Cluster of severe illness from Neptune’s Fix tianeptine linked to synthetic cannabinoids – New Jersey, June–November 2023. MMWR 2024; 73: 89-90.
- El Zahran T, Schier J, Glidden E, et al. Characteristics of tianeptine exposures reported to the National Poison Data System – United States, 2000–2017. MMWR 2018; 67: 815-818.

24-hour hotline  
1-800-222-1222

2716 South Street, 6th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19146-2305  
Administration 215-590-2003 • Fax 215-590-4419  
[www.chop.edu/centers-programs/poison-control-center](http://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/poison-control-center)

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**Summary of **tianeptine** cases\*, from PA and DE, reported to The Poison Control Center at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, from 2023-02-01 to 2024-01-31 (12 months).**

Number of cases:	15
Age range:	20 – 69 years
Gender:	13/15 (87%) male
State:	12 PA, 3 DE
Severity of Toxicity:	9/13 placed on ventilator in ICU; 1 died

Other notes:

- 4/13 specifically mentioned the brand “ZaZa”; 4/13 specifically mentioned the brand “Neptune’s”
- Commonly reported purchase at “gas station” or “vape shop”
- In half of cases, other drugs such as kratom, kava, gabapentin and THC were also used
- Cases appear to be increasing since August 2023

\*Case reports made to poison centers are voluntary and under-represent the true burden of drug toxicity in the community. Most hospital laboratories are unable to identify tianeptine on urine drug testing, and most reports are based on users’ report and do not have laboratory confirmation.