



Poison HOTLINE

1-800-222-1222

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Did you know

In the shift from abuse of prescription opioids to abuse of heroin and other illicit opioids, “colorful” slang terms have emerged for some of the illicit opioids.

A new drug called “grey death” has been linked to numerous overdoses across the U.S. The drug is a mixture of several opioids: U-47700, heroin, and fentanyl, with varying amounts of each opioid in each batch. Small doses can lead to respiratory arrest and death. The name is due to the unique grey powder appearance similar to grey concrete powder.

U-47700, nicknamed “pink”, is also causing overdoses and deaths. U-47700 is a potent synthetic opioid. Pink’s name comes from the pink hue of the powder.

Effervescent N-acetylcysteine Tablets for Oral Solution (Cetylev[®])

N-acetylcysteine (NAC) has been used for decades for the treatment of acetaminophen (APAP) overdoses to prevent or minimize liver toxicity. Preparation of NAC for oral administration has been accomplished by mixing the inhalation form of the drug with colas or other drinks to cover the bad taste. This is done because NAC has a sulfur (“rotten egg”) odor.

A new form of oral NAC, effervescent tablets for oral solution, was approved by the FDA in January of 2017. The effervescent tablets are mixed with water to form a more palatable lemon-mint tasting drink. Preparation is simple; the tablets are dissolved in water and the solution is then ready to drink. Studies have shown that the NAC effervescent tablets are bio-equivalent to the oral dosing of 20% NAC solution for inhalation. NAC is considered safe in the treatment of pregnant women with APAP overdose. NAC crosses the placenta as does APAP. Delaying treatment in pregnant women with APAP overdose may increase the risk of maternal and fetal morbidity and mortality. NAC is also considered safe in the treatment of children with APAP overdose.

Effervescent NAC tablets come in 2.5 gm and 500 mg tabs. NAC dosing with these tablets remains 140 mg/kg loading dose followed by 70 mg/kg every 4 hours for 17 doses. Doses are prepared by using a combination of the two different tablet strengths. The prescribing information, product literature and the IPCC have dosing charts for easy dosing.

There can be risks of hypersensitivity reactions. Other common side effects include nausea, vomiting and GI symptoms, including a risk of GI hemorrhage.

Effervescent NAC tablets contain a significant amount of sodium. Patients who may be sensitive to excess sodium, such as those with CHF, hypertension or renal impairment, may not be able to tolerate the amount of sodium in the drug.

Call the Iowa Poison Control Center at **1-800-222-1222** and we can calculate the dose of effervescent NAC tablets the patient needs for treatment and the amount of sodium the patient will receive from the doses of effervescent NAC.

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1-800-222-1222

Deputy Editor: Edward Bottei, MD. Post and share this edition of **Poison Hotline** with your colleagues. Send comments or questions to Poison Hotline, 712-234-8775 (fax) or Tammy.Noble@UnityPoint.org. To subscribe or unsubscribe from this distribution list, contact the IPCC education office at 712-279-3717. Read past issues of **Poison Hotline** at www.iowapoisson.org.