

Q&A



How to combat the use of etomidate and other drugs through e-cigarettes?



Although electronic cigarettes are primarily the devices used for smoking etomidate, they are not the only paraphernalia. Moreover, Macao has implemented a complete ban on the manufacture, distribution, sale, import, and export of electronic cigarettes.

Criminal penalties and four-tiered approach to drug control

After Etomidate has been listed as a controlled drug, criminal penalties are imposed on the sale and use of this substance. Whoever uses electronic cigarettes as a device to consume etomidate may be prosecuted as a criminal offense, with a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment. Although electronic cigarettes are not inherently classified as drugs, but using them to consume etomidate, which is added to the e-liquid used for electronic cigarettes, shall constitute an offense. It is regulated by the “Foreign Trade Law”, law decrees governing drugs, “Regime of Tobacco Prevention and Control” and the law on “Prohibition of Illicit Production, Trafficking and Consumption of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances”. These legal instruments collectively constitute the four-tiered approach to drug control.

In accordance with Law No. 2/2025, which amends Law No. 17/2009 on the “Prohibition of Illicit Production, Trafficking and Consumption of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances”, etomidate and its three analogues (metomidate, propoxate, and isopropoxate) are listed as controlled substances. The manufacture, sale, consumption, or possession of these substances in any form (including via electronic cigarettes) is illegal and is liable to a maximum penalty of 15 years’ imprisonment.

Don't try new psychoactive substances, knowing the law and abiding by it is of utmost important

When citizens come across unknown substances, they should remain vigilant. For those addicted to drugs, they should seek help and undergo drug treatment at once. They can call the Helpline for Drug Treatment at 28358844, where professionals will attend to their questions and provide them with necessary support. All information collected from individuals is treated with strict confidentiality, and the addiction treatment and services are free of charge.

Be aware of the consequences of drug abuse

In accordance with the law on “Prohibition of Illicit Production, Trafficking and Consumption of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances”, etomidate has been listed as a controlled substance. The illicit sale, consumption, or possession of etomidate is liable to a maximum penalty of 15 years’ imprisonment.

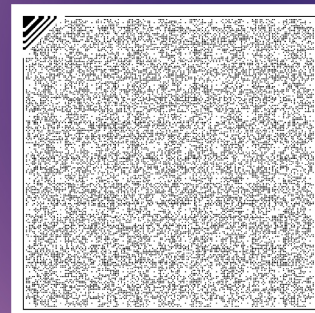
Crime / Offense	Maximum Penalty
Drug manufacture, drug trafficking	15 years
Permit others to use drugs, manufacture drugs, or sell drugs on a property that one owns or manages.	8 years
Encourage others to use drugs	3 years
Use drugs or in possession of drug paraphernalia	1 year

For more information

Anti-drug Enquiry Hotline: 2878 1791

Helpline for Drug Treatment: 2835 8844

“Anti-drugs” website: www.antidrugs.gov.mo



Harms of Etomidate



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Etomidate

Don't try new psychoactive substances, knowing the law and abiding by it is of utmost important

Etomidate, or better known by its street name of “space oil” or “head rush e-cigarette”, is a new psychoactive substance (NPS) that is usually added to cigarette tobacco or to the e-liquid used in electronic cigarettes, making etomidate users appear less noticeable to others, and who will develop an addiction to etomidate over time.



Harms of etomidate

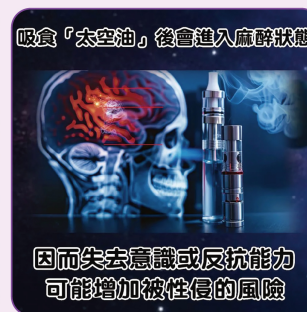
Etomidate has a strong inhibitory effect on the central nervous system. After consumption, etomidate users may experience effects similar to that of being drunk, such as tremors, dizziness, having difficulty standing, and body swaying, as well as irritability. Etomidate causes severe and irreversible damage to the brain, and may lead to respiratory arrest and death.

Side effects on the body

Etomidate users may experience side effects including loss of consciousness, inability to control one's behaviour, myoclonus (involuntary muscle twitching), sensation of coldness, itching all over the body, and visual disturbances like seeing shadows or double vision. Due to impaired awareness, they may struggle to properly judge hazards in their surroundings and unaware of the dangers posed by their actions, leading to traffic accidents or falls.

Long-term consumption of etomidate may lead to:

- Inability to control one's behaviour
- Disruption of the production and secretion of cortisol by the adrenal gland
- Hormonal imbalances
- Excessive secretion of adrenal androgens, having adverse impact on women's health and skin
- Menstrual irregularities and female genital deformities
- Severe and irreversible damage to the brain



Q&A



Why etomidate is nicknamed “space oil”?



Etomidate is a sedative and an anesthetic. Due to its misuse, it can cause its users to experience a lack of self-control, confusion, and hallucinations, making them feel like as if they are “in space”. It poses significant harm to the body.



Etomidate and electronic cigarettes, how are they related?



E-cigarettes are electronic devices that use a battery-powered coil to vaporise the e-liquid, allowing users to inhale the aerosols. Lawbreakers take advantage of the anesthetic effects of etomidate and added it to the e-liquids used for electronic cigarettes. Given that etomidate has a rapid onset of action with limited duration, users experience a quick “head rush”, hence the name “head rush e-cigarette”, misleading young people into underestimating the risks of drug use.



Can etomidate be mixed with alcohol to remove the effects of alcohol?



Both etomidate and alcohol are central nervous system depressants. Mixing them together can lead to life-threatening situations.



Why do young people become indulged in the use of etomidate?



Once exposed to etomidate, they may be more likely to try other drugs such as cocaine, a phenomenon known as the “gateway drug effect”.