

Tianeptine Now a Schedule I Controlled Substance in Kentucky

On March 23, 2023, Governor Andy Beshear signed an emergency regulation that designated tianeptine as a Schedule I controlled substance. Tianeptine is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and it has no accepted medical use in treatment. It is often found in gas stations, and online it is sold as a supplement under such names as Tianaa, ZaZa, and Tianna Red/Green/White.

Tianeptine is an atypical tricyclic antidepressant that is also a mu-opioid receptor agonist, and at high doses can induce euphoria. It is marketed as a way to treat anxiety, depression, and irritable bowel syndrome, as a nootropic, as a 'healthier' alternative to opioids, and as a way to blunt opioid withdrawals. It has high abuse potential with withdrawal symptoms appearing several hours after last ingestion. These symptoms can be severe and may require hospitalization. Symptoms include agitation, confusion, sweating, rapid heartbeat, high blood pressure, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle aches, severe anxiety, drowsiness, slowed or stopped breathing, coma, and death. Naloxone may be effective in treating tianeptine overdoses.