

Opiate Class

Heroin:

Heroin is a semi synthetic product derived from plants e.g. Papaver Somniferum. The opium extracted from these plants is treated with a chemical to acetylate the methoxy groups on the chemical structure to form the main component of Heroin known as diamorphine. Heroin is rapidly metabolised to 6-Acetylmorphine and then to morphine. Heroin is not easily detectable due to its short half-life. Diamorphine is used medicinally in some countries, but it is illegal in Ireland.

6-Acetylmorphine:

This is a metabolite of Heroin. It can be detected in blood and there is currently a legal limit of 5ng/ml for this metabolite. This metabolite is rarely detected above 5ng/ml in blood.

Morphine:

Morphine is also derived from plants like Papaver Somniferum. It is commonly used to treat pain in a medical setting on prescription. There is no legal limit for morphine in the Irish Road Traffic Act. Examples of morphine containing medicines include MST, Sevredol, Oramorph and Cyclomorph (source www.hpra.ie).

Codeine:

Codeine is another opiate class drug which is used to treat pain. It does not require a prescription and is available over the counter in Pharmacies. In low doses it is safe to use and does not affect driving but like other opiates in this class it is commonly abused and at higher level will cause impairment. It is also a metabolite of Heroin and Morphine. There is no legal limit for codeine in the Irish Road Traffic Act. Examples of codeine containing medicines include Solpadeine, Nurofen Plus, Migralve, Tylex, Kapake, Codipar, Solpa Plus and Solpadol (source www.hpra.ie).

Methadone:

Methadone is synthetic drug which is used to treat opiate addiction. Its chemical structure is very different to the naturally occurring opiates and this class of drug is sometimes referred to as opioids. There is no legal limit for methadone in the Irish Road Traffic Act.

2-Ethylidene-1,5-Dimethyl-3,3-Diphenylpyrrolidine (EDDP):

2-Ethylidene-1,5-Dimethyl-3,3-Diphenylpyrrolidine or EDDP for short is an inactive metabolite of Methadone. There is no legal limit for EDDP in the Irish Road Traffic Act

Tramadol:

Tramadol is an opiate class drug which is used to treat pain. It is a prescription only medicine. It may cause drowsiness, fatigue, confusion and blurred vision. Its use with alcohol is not advised. Its main metabolite is O-desmethyl Tramadol which is pharmacologically active. There is no legal limit for Tramadol or its main metabolite, in the Irish Road Traffic Act. Examples of Tramadol containing medicines include; Madol, Ixprim, Skudexa, Tradol, Tramake, Xymel, Zydol (source www.hpra.ie)