

## ETIZOLAM

(Trade Names: Etilaam, Etizest, Depas, Etizola, Sedekopan, Pasaden)

### Introduction:

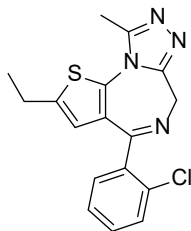
Etizolam is a thienodiazepine, which is chemically related to a class of substances known as benzodiazepines. Benzodiazepines produce central nervous system (CNS) depression and are commonly used to treat panic disorders, insomnia, and anxiety.

### Licit Uses:

Etizolam is not approved for medical use in the United States. In some other countries, etizolam is used as a prescription medication. In Japan, etizolam was introduced in 1983 as a treatment for neurological conditions, such as anxiety and sleep disorders. In countries that market etizolam for clinical use, this substance is available as 0.25 mg, 0.5 mg, and 1.0 mg tablets.

### Chemistry:

Etizolam is chemically known as 4-(2-chlorophenyl)-2-ethyl-9-methyl-6H-thieno[3,2-f][1,2,4]triazolo[4,3-a][1,4]diazepine. The CAS for etizolam is 40054-69-1. The structure of etizolam is shown below:



### Pharmacology:

Etizolam, like other benzodiazepines (e.g., diazepam), produces CNS depressant effects, such as anxiolytic, anticonvulsant, sedative-hypnotic, and muscle relaxant effects. However, unlike diazepam, etizolam also exhibits pharmacological effects similar to those of tricyclic antidepressants (e.g., imipramine). Animal studies have demonstrated that etizolam is 6–10 times more potent than diazepam in most of its pharmacological effects. In monkeys, etizolam fully substituted for the discriminative effects of phenobarbital—a schedule II barbiturate. Clinical studies on etizolam pharmacology are limited. In a single-dose pharmacokinetic study in humans, etizolam was rapidly absorbed; the maximum plasma concentration occurred within 0.5–2 hours, and the mean elimination half-life averaged 3.4 hours. Clinical observations of physical dependence on etizolam were also reported. Major adverse effects include drowsiness, sedation, muscle weakness and incoordination, fainting, headache, confusion, depression, slurred speech, visual disturbances, and changes in libido and tremor.

### Illicit Uses:

Although etizolam has legitimate pharmaceutical use in other countries, etizolam has no accepted medical use in the United States. Etizolam has been increasingly detected in toxicology samples, identified as an adulterant in seized samples, and involved in greater numbers of reported driving under the influence of drugs (DUID) cases.

DEA's Toxicology Testing Program (DEA TOX) is a surveillance program that aims to detect new psychoactive substances in the United States. DEA TOX has detected etizolam in 15 fatal and nonfatal overdose cases since 2019. In addition, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Early Warning Advisory (EWA) Toxicology Portal (Tox-Portal)—an online tool to collect toxicological and harm data associated with new psychoactive substance (NPS) use—has published biannual reports (Current NPS Threats) to identify most harmful NPS. These reports indicate that etizolam is used in European countries, such as Switzerland and Sweden, as well as Canada and Australia. In 2023, etizolam was the most common benzodiazepine-type NPS reported in postmortem (n = 30) and DUID (n = 45) cases and was also reported in drug-facilitated crime cases. In 2025, UNODC reported that benzodiazepine-type NPS continued to constitute the greatest number of NPS reported to the Tox-Portal across postmortem, DUID, and clinical admission cases. More recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released "The Fentalog Study," which utilizes data collected from 10 geographically diverse hospitals in 9 states across the United States. As of January 2026, the study tested 2,480 samples between February 2020 and April 2025; of these, 8% of blood specimens from suspected opioid-involved overdoses tested positive for illicit benzodiazepines and etizolam was positively identified in 19% of these specimens.

### User Population:

Multiple studies suggest that a broad range of populations (including youths, young adults, and older adults) use etizolam. The population likely to abuse etizolam appears to be the same as those abusing prescription benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and other sedative hypnotic substances.

### Illicit Distribution:

Etizolam has been illicitly purchased online and the substance is typically labeled as a research chemical not intended for human consumption. Etizolam has been sold as powder, tablets, and spiked onto blotter paper.

DEA's National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) Drug database collects scientifically verified data on drug items and cases submitted to and analyzed by participating federal, state, and local forensic drug laboratories. NFLIS-Drug has received over 19,800 reports of etizolam since it was first reported in 2002, including 504 in 2015, 5,260 in 2020; 4,453 in 2021; 1,487 in 2022; 439 in 2023; 195 in 2024, and 120 in 2025 (reports still pending).

### Control Status:

Etizolam is controlled in schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act.