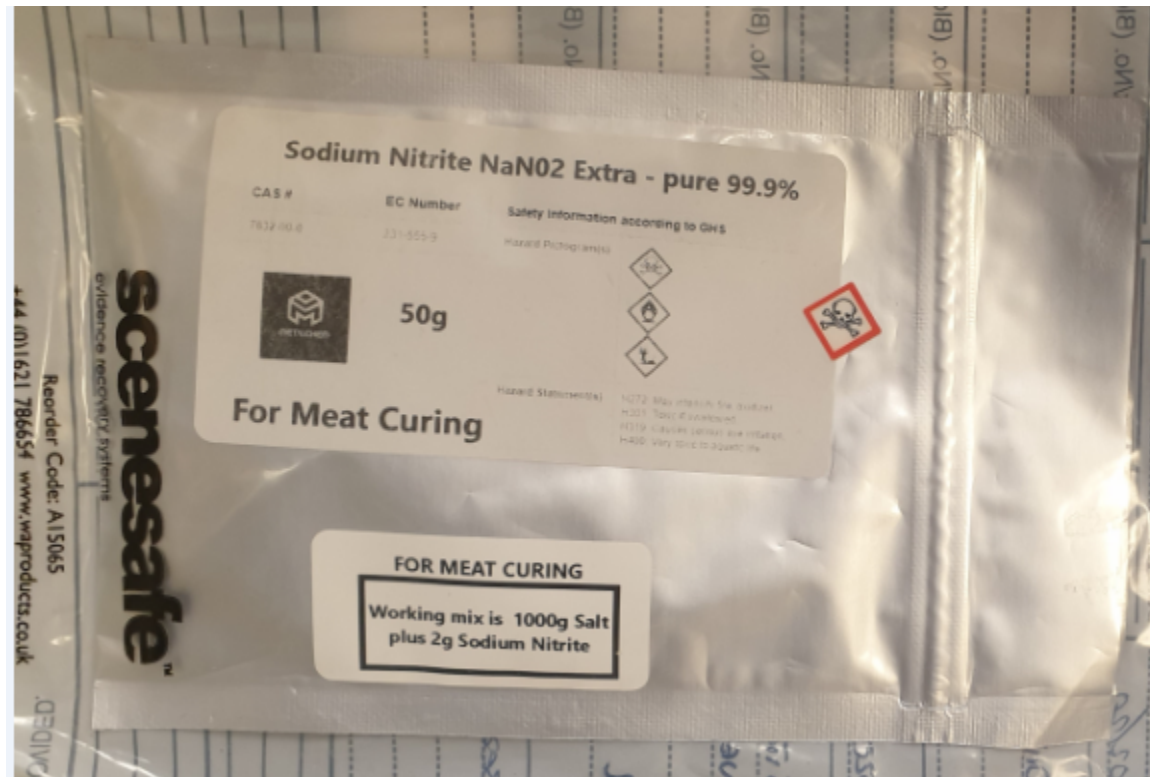


Officer Awareness: Sodium Nitrite Suicide Kits Suicide



Officer Awareness

- Sodium Nitrite is a synthetic commodity which can be purchased legitimately on line for the purpose of meat curing & Photography. It has a similar appearance to salt.
- In recent years it has become a commodity to assist with Suicide and GMP has investigated some recent cases.
- These Deaths may be difficult to identify and may appear natural without further investigation or evidence at the scene.
- Sodium Nitrite will normally be dissolved in liquid to produce a toxic drink and taken with an “Antiemetic” a drug which prevents vomiting and nausea.

Officer Awareness

- Officer's attending a scene of death should be escalating to a Detective Inspector for Special Procedure Investigation if such evidence is present.
- Sodium Nitrite Packaging
- Antiemetic Drugs / Packaging
- Drinking vessels which may still contain evidence of toxic solution
- Evidence of recent purchase of Sodium Nitrite
- Evidence of web research into Sodium Nitrite / Suicide Forums

Sodium Nitrite Suicide Kit



- The mechanism of toxicity from sodium nitrite is mainly via methaemoglobinaemia and nitric oxide induced vasodilation.
- Sodium nitrite is readily absorbed from the gut; methaemoglobinaemia can occur within a few minutes, but may be delayed for 45 minutes or more after exposure.
- Activated charcoal can be used if the patient presents within 1 hour of ingestion of any amount providing it is safe to do so and the airway can be protected. Efficacy declines rapidly with time since ingestion but there may be some potential benefit from later use, especially following ingestion of highly toxic substances.
- The decision to administer methylthioninium chloride (methylene blue) to treat methaemoglobinaemia is based on clinical features and the MetHb concentration. If treatment is required with methylthioninium chloride (methylene blue) the dose is 1-2 mg/kg (e.g. 0.2 – 0.4 mL/kg IV of a 5 mg/mL (0.5% wt/wt) ampoule solution in 100 mL of 5% dextrose) over 5 minutes.
-
- both activated charcoal and methylene blue are available in A&E and they just need to follow the guidance on Toxbase if presented with a case.