

COVID-19 Guidance for Naloxone Kit Distribution

The intersecting drug poisoning crisis and COVID-19 pandemic have required the adaptation of recommended practices to maintain the health of clients, the community and staff. **Naloxone distribution remains a vital lifesaving service.**

The ways in which programs are conducted must take into consideration up-to-date information about COVID-19, and related infection prevention and control recommendations. With that in mind we are providing the advice below from the Ontario Naloxone Program (ONP) and Toronto Public Health to assist you in revising your protocols for naloxone distribution.

- 1. For reliable, up-to-date information on COVID-19 and the situation in Toronto, frequently review the City of Toronto's website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19.**
- 2. Continue dispensing intranasal naloxone kits and encouraging their use in overdose response.** Public Health Ontario has confirmed that intranasal naloxone administration does not produce aerosols that could spread COVID-19.
- 3. Encourage all clients to wear non-latex gloves and a mask or face covering every time they respond to an overdose.** All naloxone kits contain gloves, which help prevent potential COVID-19 spread through droplet contact. After responding to an overdose, the gloves should be immediately disposed of in a garbage can, and followed up with meticulous hand hygiene. Consider distributing surgical masks for clients to use in overdose response.
- 4. Advise clients to provide chest compressions only when responding to an overdose if they trained and able.** The ONP advises against full cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) during COVID-19 due to the heightened risk of disease transmission with the rescue breathing component.
- 5. Advise clients not to provide rescue breaths when responding to an overdose during the COVID 19 pandemic.** Rescue breathing provides a direct route for disease transmission. There is no evidence to suggest that the CPR face shields in naloxone kits or one-way valve masks provide adequate protection against COVID-19.
- 6. Advise clients to prioritize giving naloxone and calling 911 for every overdose.** Work with clients to devise the safest ways for them to interface with paramedics and police.
- 7. Whenever possible, agencies that provide naloxone training and kits should provide virtual naloxone training to clients.** The following training videos may be useful:
 - [Intranasal naloxone administration](#) (Canadian Pharmacists Association and the University of Waterloo)
 - [Overdose response with naloxone administration](#) (CarrynaloxONe Toolkit)

- 8. If resource and logistical pressures do not allow for virtual training, naloxone kits may be provided to clients without training during the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- 9. Advise clients on where to access naloxone in Toronto.** Refer to the Ontario Ministry of Health's naloxone website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/where-get-free-naloxone-kit>. Recommend that clients call ahead, if possible, to ensure kits are available, and let them know that pharmacies will ask for name, OHIP number and other information in order to dispense a kit.
- 10. Advise clients and staff to download the [COVID Alert app](#)** so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.

More information

If you have any questions about naloxone kit distribution, please contact Toronto Public Health/The Works harm reduction program by phone at 416-392-0520, or email at overdose@toronto.ca.

For more information about COVID-19, visit www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600.