

Carfentanil Circulating in Toronto

August 18, 2021

Carfentanil, a fentanyl analogue considered to be 100 times stronger than fentanyl, is currently circulating in Toronto. [Toronto's drug checking service](#) found carfentanil in four samples expected to be fentanyl on August 17, 2021. These samples were collected at The Works and Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (Queen West site), and three of the samples were reported as being associated with an overdose. The Works has also seen an increase in overdoses over the past two days. The drugs associated with the overdoses were light pink fentanyl and green fentanyl.

There continues to be a high number of overdoses in Toronto. In July 2021, Toronto Paramedic Services (TPaS) attended 562 non-fatal and 26 fatal calls for suspected opioid overdoses. This is the highest monthly number of non-fatal calls due to suspected opioid overdoses attended by TPaS since monitoring started in 2017. Preliminary data for the beginning of August show that the number of suspected opioid overdose calls attended by TPaS remains high. In July 2021, The Works' staff reversed the highest number of overdoses (n=75) since the SCS opened. Visit toronto.ca/health/overdosestats for more data. Other SCSs in Toronto also report an increase in overdoses at their sites in July.

[Toronto's drug checking service](#) continues to find highly potent nitazene opioids, such as isotonitazene, etonitazene, metonitazene, etodesnitazene and etonitazepyne, in samples expected to be fentanyl. These may be up to 20 times stronger than fentanyl.

We provide this data with respect and a deep appreciation for what they mean, and how they refer to our loved ones, friends, families and colleagues. The tragic and substantial losses that people face from the drug poisoning crisis, and the grief experienced, are immeasurable.

Overdose response and prevention advice for people using drugs:

- **Try not to use alone.** A buddy system is safer than using alone.
- **Use a supervised consumption service, if possible.** For locations visit: toronto.ca/ConsumptionServices.
- **If you must use alone, have a safety plan.** Get someone to check on you either by phone or in person. Before you use alone, call the National Overdose Response Service at **1-888-688-NORS (6677)**. You can connect to community members via the [Brave app](#).
- **Vet your supply.** Ask others about what they are experiencing with the same drug or batch.
- **Check what's in your drugs at local drug checking services.** The Works, South Riverdale Community Health Centre (KeepSIX and Moss Park) and Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (Queen West and Parkdale sites) can check for you.
- **Get naloxone.** Kits are available at The Works, Parkdale-Queen West CHC, Regent Park CHC, South Riverdale CHC, Fred Victor, Eva's Satellite, Sistering, Sherbourne Health Centre, Seaton House, Agincourt Community Services Association, John Howard Society (3313 Lakeshore Blvd West), LAMP CHC, Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities 2660 Eglinton Avenue East), and other agencies. Free naloxone kits are available at some pharmacies. Visit www.ontario.ca/page/get-naloxone-kits-free or call 1-800-565-8603.

If someone looks like they are overdosing on opioids, give naloxone and call 911.

Wear a face covering and gloves. Keep a 6 foot distance from the person whenever you are not providing direct care to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

See overdose response tips in the [5-Step Response](#) poster.



5 STEP OVERDOSE RESPONSE

STEP **1**  **SHOUT & SHAKE**
their name their shoulders

STEP **2**  **CALL 911**
if unresponsive

STEP **3**  **ADMINISTER NALOXONE**
1 spray into a nostril and/or 1 ampule into arm or leg

STEP **4**  **START CPR**
Do CHEST COMPRESSIONS ONLY
during COVID19 – NO rescue breathing

STEP **5**  **IS IT WORKING?**
If NO improvement in 2–3 minutes
repeat steps 3 & 4

STAY WITH THE PERSON

Clean your hands after providing care.