

Toronto Drug Poisoning Crisis Monitoring Update

September 24, 2021

In August 2021, Toronto Paramedic Services responded to a record number of non-fatal calls for suspected opioid overdoses. Toronto Paramedic Services responded to **689** non-fatal and **30** fatal calls for suspected opioid overdoses.

Substance-related emergency department visits and suspected overdoses attended to at Toronto hospitals have continued to increase since April 2021 and reached a peak in August 2021. There were 1,798 substance-related visits to the emergency department and 402 suspected overdoses attended to in August 2021.

The Works reversed a record number of overdoses in August 2021. There were 1,623 visits and **107** overdoses at the Works (277 Victoria St) in August.

More information is available at toronto.ca/health/overdosestats.

[Toronto's drug checking service](#) continues to find unexpected and highly potent substances in the unregulated drug supply.

We respectfully acknowledge the tragic and substantial losses and grief experienced due to the drug poisoning crisis.

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. The Works is open on Sundays from 11 am - 5pm and Monday - Saturday from 10 am - 10 pm.** For locations and hours of other sites 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.