

High Number of Suspected Drug-Related Deaths in Toronto East of Yonge St.

November 23, 2021

There has been a recent significant and sudden spike in suspected drug-related deaths in Toronto east of Yonge St. Data from the Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario shows 16 suspected drug-related deaths from November 8-14 in Toronto east of Yonge St. (including areas of Scarborough, North York, East York, and the downtown east). This is double the weekly median for this part of Toronto this year. These deaths are under investigation to determine the cause of death.

[Toronto's drug checking service](#) has found that recent yellow fentanyl samples collected in the downtown east and associated with overdoses contained flualprazolam in combination with fentanyl or etonitazepine. Flualprazolam is a high-potency, short-acting benzodiazepine-related drug. Etonitazepine is a nitazene opioid considered to be 10 times stronger than fentanyl.

There have also been recent reports about people experiencing severe overdoses after using yellow fentanyl in the Dundas and Sherbourne and Queen and Sherbourne area of downtown east, including at the Moss Park CTS.

Yellow fentanyl associated with severe overdose



Photo credit: Moss Park CTS

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 Monday - Saturday from 10 am - 10 pm and on Sundays from 11 am - 5pm.** 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.



The Works
- Needle Exchange

416.338.7600 toronto.ca/health

 **TORONTO** Public Health

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.