

Recent increase in overdose deaths in Toronto

July 22, 2022

Why are we sending this alert?

- Preliminary data from Toronto Paramedic Services shows that from **July 17th-21st, 2022**, there were **10 suspected opioid overdose-related deaths**. Including these deaths, a total of **21 suspected opioid overdose-related deaths** have been reported so far for the month of **July**.
- There appears to be a potential increase in deaths from **smoking opioids and stimulants**.

Additional Information

- A range of drugs were involved in this increase in overdose fatalities.
- Fentanyl continues to show up in the local drug supply in a variety of colours with unpredictable potency and contamination.
- [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#) has recently found **higher amounts** of fentanyl in fentanyl substances and **potential evidence of crack cocaine being contaminated with fentanyl**. A sample submitted as used crack cocaine equipment was found to contain cocaine, fentanyl, and caffeine; this equipment was reported not to have been reused.
- According to Toronto Paramedic Services reports, drug inhalation equipment, such as pipes, were present on scene in a number of the overdose deaths.
- Overdoses are occurring in a variety of neighbourhoods across the city.

Messages for people using drugs in Toronto:

- **Try not to use alone.** Buddy up with someone who you trust. Have a drug use safety plan and keep naloxone on-hand.
- **Use a supervised consumption service, if possible.** For locations and hours of sites please 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.
 - Consider calling the National Overdose Response Service at [1-888-688-NORS \(6677\)](tel:1-888-688-NORS) to get [support while using alone](#).
 - Connect to community members virtually 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.** Your drugs might have unexpected substances in them. Have them checked at one of the drug checking service locations in [Toronto](#).
- **Get naloxone.** Kits are available at Toronto Public Health, The Works, and through many [partner organizations](#). Free naloxone kits are also 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.
Follow the [5-Step Response](#) to opioid overdose.



Smoke Drugs?

You can still OD.

And it can happen fast.

- **Know what you're smoking** – get your drugs checked before using.
- **Pace yourself** – take breaks as you go.
- **Buddy up** – use with someone you trust who can help if you go down.
- **Keep naloxone** close at hand.
- **Call NORS** – a free, anonymous phone call for real-time, life-saving support!

1-888-688-NORS (6677)

