

Increase in Inhalation-Related Deaths and Contamination of Toronto's Opioid Supply

December 13, 2022

Why are we sending this alert?

1. From December 5-11, 2022, preliminary data from Toronto Paramedics Service indicate **9 suspected opioid overdose deaths**. Spikes in fatal overdoses were also observed in October and November.
2. There appears to be a potential increase in suspected opioid overdose deaths from smoking drugs. Data from Toronto Paramedic Services indicates that drug inhalation equipment, such as pipes or foils, were present on scene in some recent suspected opioid overdose deaths.
3. [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#) recently found a **significant increase in the presence of fluorofentanyl**, a fentanyl-related drug which is considered to be as strong as fentanyl.
 - Fluorofentanyl is showing up in samples purchased as fentanyl, in combination with fentanyl and/or other high-potency opioids, such as carfentanil or nitazene opioids.
 - **Higher than usual concentrations of fentanyl** and an **increase in benzodiazepine-related drugs continue to be found** in expected fentanyl samples.

Note: A range of drugs were involved in these fatalities. Fentanyl continues to show up in the local drug supply in a variety of colours with unpredictable potency and contamination.

Location: Overdoses are occurring in a variety of neighbourhoods across the city.

Messages for people using drugs in Toronto:

- **Try not to use drugs alone, including when smoking drugs.** Buddy up with someone who you trust. Have a drug use safety plan and keep naloxone on-hand.
- **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](#).
- **Pace yourself.** Take breaks as you go.
- **Use a supervised consumption service, if possible.** For locations and hours of sites please visit: toronto.ca/ConsumptionServices.
- **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.



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)

