

High Number of Overdose Calls to Paramedics

May 01, 2024

Why are we sending this alert?

- Toronto Paramedic Services attended a **high number of suspected opioid overdose-related calls on April 30th, 2024.**
 - Preliminary data shows there were **35 suspected opioid overdose-related calls**, which is **approximately three times higher than the average number of daily calls in the last 30 days.**
 - No fatal calls for suspected opioid-overdoses were reported.
- The Works supervised consumption service has been **responding to overdoses that are atypical in presentation and require greater doses of naloxone to rouse individuals.**
 - Recently observed behaviours include rigidity, flailing and incoherent speech which is different compared to typically observed overdose behaviours where individuals may be slow-moving or unresponsive.
- [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#) continues to confirm significantly worsening contamination and unpredictability of the unregulated opioid supply. [Recent trends](#) in expected fentanyl samples include:
 - **Increase in high-potency opioid contamination**
 - **Increase in benzodiazepine-related drug contamination**
 - **Increase in veterinary tranquilizer contamination**
- There is no additional information available at this time about the specific drugs connected to these overdoses.

Messages for people using drugs in Toronto:

- **Try not to use alone.** Buddy up with someone who you trust.
- **Keep naloxone on-hand.**
 - 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.
 - Benzodiazepines in the unregulated drug supply may cause people to be sedated longer than usual. Because naloxone will not work on the benzodiazepines, some people may remain unconscious after naloxone administration even after their breathing returns.
- **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.
 - Call 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](#).
- **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](#).
- [ConnexOntario](#) provides 24/7 support and connection to treatment and support services for people experiencing problems with mental health, drugs, alcohol, and/or gambling.

5 STEP OVERDOSE RESPONSE

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

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**
Perform rescue breathing and/or chest compressions

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



During overdose response. Stay up to date with your COVID-19 and flu vaccines.

 **TORONTO** Public Health