

COMMUNITY DRUG ALERT

June 18, 2024

Increase in overdose/drug poisoning deaths

- There have been 5 suspected drug-related deaths from June 12 to June 17.
- The unregulated drug supply is unpredictable and unexpected reactions may occur.
- Hot and humid conditions are expected through most of the week. There can be increased risk of death from drug toxicity during very hot weather. See page 2 for more information.
- A list of Cooling Centre locations and hours can be found at:
<http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/coolingandwarmingcentres>.


IF SOMEONE OVERDOSES:

1. Call 911.
2. Administer naloxone if an opioid drug poisoning is suspected.
3. Perform rescue breathing and/or chest compressions.
4. Do not give any other substance(s) because this can make the overdose/drug poisoning worse.
5. If no improvements, continue to give naloxone 2-3 minutes apart until paramedics arrive.
6. If you have to leave the person unattended, put them in the recovery position.

IF USING SUBSTANCES:

- Never use substances alone. If using with a friend, do not use at the exact same time or use the National Overdose Response Service (NORS) at 1-888-688-6677.
- Try a small amount first and use less drugs when your tolerance may be lower.
- Avoid mixing substances – do not use other downers (e.g. benzos, alcohol, and other opioids).
- Have naloxone ready and know how to use it.
- Use at the Consumption & Treatment Services (CTS) site at 150 Duke Street West (Open 7 days a week, 9am-9pm, 8:30pm last call). Drug checking services are also available at the CTS site. Visit <https://sanguen.com/drug-checking-program/>
- Anyone who is involved in an overdose/drug poisoning including the person needing help and anyone at the scene is protected from simple possession charges if you call 911 by the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act.

RESOURCES

Get a Naloxone Kit	Get Alerts	Get Support
<p>Naloxone kits and harm reduction supplies are free and available for pickup across Waterloo Region.</p> <p>For pickup at public health or a community partner location, visit regionofwaterloo.ca/harmreduction or call 519-575-4400.</p> <p>For other locations in Waterloo Region and across Ontario, visit Ontario.ca/naloxone.</p>	<p>Follow us on Twitter for community drug alert updates: @DrugStrategyWR.</p> <p>To sign up to receive alerts, visit https://subscription.waterlooregiondrugstrategy.ca/Subscribe or scan the QR code with a mobile device.</p> 	<p>Call Here 24/7 for addiction, mental health, and crisis services anytime for support.</p> <p>1-844-437-3247 1-844-HERE247 here247.ca.</p>

Heat Warning and Substance Use

- **Hot and humid conditions are expected through most of the week.** Daytime highs on Monday through much of the week are expected to be 30 to 35°C with humidex values of 40 to 45°C. There will be little relief through the overnight as lows are expected to be 20 to 23°C with humidex values of 26 to 30°C.
- Individuals who use drugs have an increased risk of death from drug toxicity during very hot weather.
- Using opioids during extreme heat can contribute to a decreased level of consciousness. Using stimulants can increase heart rate resulting in an increased body temperature (hyperthermia). This can cause dehydration.
- Dehydration from extreme heat can affect your tolerance to drugs and can increase the risk of death from an overdose/drug poisoning.
- Watch for the effects of heat illness:
 - Dizziness or fainting
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Headache
 - Rapid breathing and heartbeat
 - Extreme thirst
 - Decreased urination with unusually dark yellow urine
- Heat illness can also result in swelling, rash, cramps, fainting, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and the worsening of some health conditions.
- Drink plenty of water even before you feel thirsty and stay in a cool place. Use cool cloths on your forehead, back of neck and armpits to cool down.
- Check in on others and make sure they are cool and drinking water.
- Cooling Space locations and hours (including interactive map):
www.regionofwaterloo.ca/CoolingSpaces



Detected Substances from the Drug Checking Program – Key Information

Fentanyl

- A highly potent opioid, considered up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Fentanyl is the opioid of choice for many people who use opioids. Since the unregulated drug supply is unpredictable, a person may want to use fentanyl but it could be laced with something else or could be stronger.
- Naloxone can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose/ drug poisoning.

Fentanyl Analogues

- The continued presence of new high-potency opioids increases the risk of an overdose/ drug poisoning and may require more naloxone than expected to rouse individuals.

Xylazine

- A veterinary medication used on animals for sedation, muscle relaxation, and pain relief.
- The presence of opioids in combination with Xylazine increases the risk of an overdose/ drug poisoning and death. Naloxone should still be used to reverse the effects of opioids, but naloxone cannot reverse the effects of Xylazine.
- In the event of an opioid and Xylazine overdose/drug poisoning, the effects of Xylazine might maintain sedation for a longer period of time. This means that the person may not wake up for an extended amount of time. If possible, stay with the person until they wake up or help arrives.
- Xylazine can produce significant harmful effects such as:
 - Shallow or slow breathing.
 - Low blood pressure and decreased heart rate.
 - Blurred vision, disorientation, dizziness, drowsiness, difficulty moving, slurred speech and fatigue.
 - Death.
- Xylazine can cause skin ulcers or wounds with possible infection, even if Xylazine is smoked or snorted. Xylazine wounds can take months or years to heal, and may not heal without medical care.

Drug checking is available at the Kitchener CTS site, for more information please visit:
<https://sanguen.com/drug-checking-program/>



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