

February 9, 2024

Opioid/Drug Safety Update

From January 29 to February 4, 2024, calls to Paramedics Services in York Region for drug overdoses for a variety of substances, including opioids and a mix of other substances including alcohol, were higher than expected. As well, emergency department visits for suspected drug overdoses by residents and at hospitals in York Region, were also higher than expected. There was one suspect overdose-related death this week. There is no further information on the substances associated with the increase or if new/unusual substances have been reported by emergency departments; however, [Toronto Drug Checking Services](#) issued an alert last week on finding a new drug, medetomidine/dexmedetomidine, in the unregulated drug supply. Exposure to this drug may be associated with loss of consciousness, and potentially depression of cardiac, circulatory, and respiratory systems. Additionally, the [City of Belleville](#) declared a state of emergency on February 8, 2024 for the growing addiction, mental health and homelessness crisis.

If you/your clients are aware of unusual appearing products or experienced unusual/unexpected symptoms after using a product, please report to york.ca/reportbadddrugs.

Remember:

Carry naloxone

- Naloxone only works on opioids. However, naloxone should be administered to a person experiencing an overdose to reverse the effects of any opioids that may be present in the substance
- Additional doses of naloxone may be needed to reverse an overdose as potent opioids are being found in the unregulated drug supply
- Find the closest location where you can get naloxone at ontario.ca/naloxone, or call 1-877-464-9675 X 76683 or email substance@york.ca

Never use alone

- Whenever possible, use substances with someone else and take turns spotting for one another
- If you're alone, consider reaching out to the [National Overdose Response Service \(NORS\)](#) at 1-888-688-6677 – this Canada-wide service will support you over the phone and call 911 if needed
- Visit your closest [Supervised Consumption Service](#)

Before using, ask others about what they are experiencing with the same drug or batch

If you are feeling depressed, lonely, anxious, scared, angry, or have other mental distress, call 310-COPE at 1-855-310-2673 or (TTY) 1-866-323-7785

PUBLIC HEALTH

york.ca/opioids

21-5318

Report a bad drug reaction or overdose concern to York Region Public Health at
york.ca/reportbadddrugs

York Region

TWO STEPS TO HELP

SAVE A LIFE OPIOID OVERDOSE

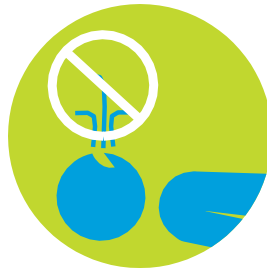
DURING COVID-19

STEP 1 :

Look for signs of an OVERDOSE



Not moving and
can't be woken



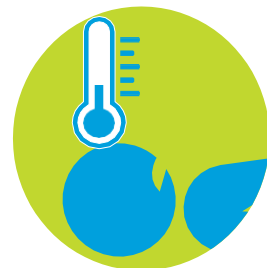
Slow or not
breathing



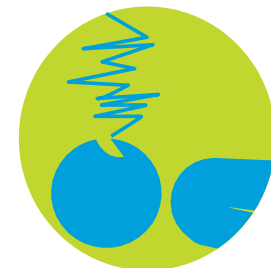
Blue or purple lips
and nails



Tiny pupils



Cold or clammy skin



Choking, gurgling
sounds or snoring

Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction

Visit: york.ca/opioids or

Call: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 76683

TTY: 1-866-512-6228

Email: substance@york.ca


York Region

STEP 2:

Follow these steps when giving NALOXONE



Tap and shout



Call **911**



Give naloxone: 1 nasal spray*
or injection into arm or leg



Perform Chest Compressions
Rescue breathing may
be considered**



Is it working?
YES



NO improvement? Give naloxone
again, continue chest compressions**
and check in 2 - 3 minutes



**PUT PERSON IN RECOVERY
POSITION (LEFT SIDE)**

IF: they begin breathing on their own or if
you have to leave them alone.

*GIVING NASAL NALOXONE DURING COVID-19 DOES NOT PRODUCE AEROSOLS.

**FOR RESCUE BREATHING: TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INFECTIONS FROM RESPIRATORY SECRETIONS, INCLUDING INFLUENZA AND COVID-19, USE THE BREATHING BARRIER IN EACH KIT. UP-TO-DATE VACCINATIONS MAY ALSO HELP REDUCE BUT NOT COMPLETELY ELIMINATE THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION OF INFECTION.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

York Region Public Health Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction program:

substance@york.ca or 1-877-464-9675 ext. 76683

Report Bad Drugs: york.ca/reportbaddrugs

Connex Ontario: connexontario.ca or 1-866-531-2600