

July 12, 2022

# OPIOID/DRUG SAFETY UPDATE

The Canadian Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use and The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction recently released a [drug alert](#) about Xylazine, a tranquilizer used in veterinary medicine. Xylazine has emerged as an increasingly common cutting agent added to opioids on the unregulated market in both Canada and the United States and has also been identified alongside cocaine and methamphetamine.

Xylazine is being found through samples checked by [Toronto Drug Checking Services](#). Xylazine and other substances in the unregulated drug supply can increase the risk of unintentional overdose, especially when combined with other substances such as alcohol, opioids or benzodiazepines. Exercise extreme caution when using substances as Xylazine may also be present in York Region.

## Remember:

- **Carry naloxone**
  - Naloxone only works on opioids, it will not work on Xylazine. 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. Call 1-877-464-9675 X 76683 or email [substance@york.ca](mailto:substance@york.ca) to get naloxone kit(s)
- Xylazine can increase the risk of overdose and death. **Call 911 when responding to any overdose situation**
- **A buddy system is safer than using alone.** Use substances with someone else and take turns spotting for one another
  - If possible, stay six feet from your buddy if you're not from the same household to reduce COVID-19 transmission
  - If you're alone, consider reaching out to the **National Overdose Response Service** (1-888-688-6677). This service will support you over the phone and call 911 if needed
- 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

**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
[york.ca/opioids](http://york.ca/opioids)

1-855-310-2673 or (TTY)  
1-866-323-7785.

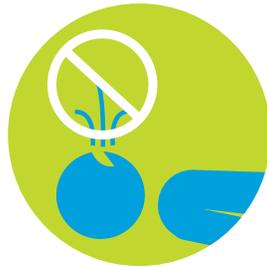
Report a bad reaction to drugs or overdose concerns  
to [York.ca/ReportBadDrugs](http://York.ca/ReportBadDrugs).

TWO STEPS TO HELP  
**SAVE A LIFE**  
**OPIOID OVERDOSE**  
DURING COVID-19

**STEP 1 :**  
Look for signs of an **OVERDOSE**



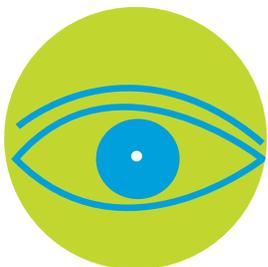
Not moving and  
can't be woken



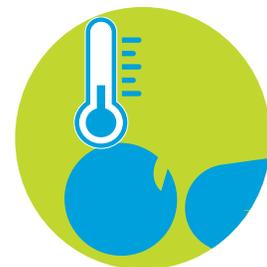
Slow or not  
breathing



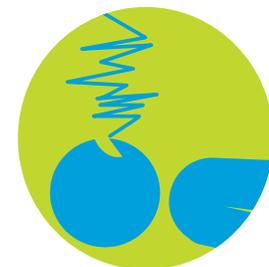
Blue or purple lips  
and nails



Tiny pupils



Cold or clammy skin



Choking, gurgling  
sounds or snoring

Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction

Visit: [york.ca/opioids](https://york.ca/opioids) or

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

TTY: 1-866-512-6228

Email: [substance@york.ca](mailto:substance@york.ca)

# STEP 2:

## Follow these steps when giving NALOXONE



Tap and shout



Call 911



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



Chest compressions\*\*



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.  
\*\*AT THIS TIME WE DO NOT RECOMMEND GIVING RESCUE BREATHS. PERFORMING CHEST  
COMPRESSIONS DURING CPR IS NOT DANGEROUS.**

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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

[substance@york.ca](mailto:substance@york.ca) or 1-877-464-9675 ext. 76683

Report Bad Drugs: [york.ca/reportbaddrugs](http://york.ca/reportbaddrugs)

Connex Ontario: [connexontario.ca](http://connexontario.ca) or 1-866-531-2600