

For the week ending January 11, 2026, calls to York Region paramedic services for suspect and possible drug overdoses was higher than expected. Emergency department visits for suspected drug overdose, by York Region residents and for visits to York Region hospitals, were also higher than expected. There were three suspect drug related deaths in a four-day period.

The composition of drugs is unknown; however, veterinary tranquilizer Medetomidine continues to be found at high rates through Toronto Drug Checking Services. Refer to the attachment for more information about Medetomidine.

CARRY NALOXONE

- Naloxone only works on opioids. Administer naloxone to a person that is showing signs of an opioid poisoning/overdose:
 - Person can't be woken up
 - Breathing is slow or has stopped
 - Snoring or gurgling sounds
 - Blue or purple fingernails and lips
 - Pupils are tiny or eyes are rolled back
 - Body is limp
- Additional doses may be needed as potent opioids are being found in the unregulated supply
- To find where you can get naloxone, visit: ontario.ca/naloxone, or call 1-877-464-9675 Ext. 76683 or email substance@york.ca

NEVER USE ALONE

- Use substances in a safe space with people you trust. You can be unconscious for a long time.
- Take turns spotting for one another
- Consider checking your drugs using test strips or a [drug checking service](#)
- If you're alone:
 - Consider calling or texting [National Overdose Response Service \(NORS\)](#) 1-888-688-6677 – a Canada-wide service to support you over the phone and call 911 if needed
 - Have someone check on you

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

Remember:

If you are feeling depressed, lonely, anxious, scared, angry, or have other mental distress:

Call/Text 310-COPE: 1-855-310-COPE (2673) TTY: 1-866-323-7785 or Live Chat: yssn.ca/310-cope

Krasman Warm Line & Peer Crisis Support Services: 1-888-777-0979

Report a bad reaction or poisoning/overdose concern anonymously to York Region Public Health at york.ca/ReportDrugPoisoning

5 STEPS TO RESPOND TO AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

STEP
1



SHOUT & SHAKE
their name & shake their shoulders

STEP
2



CALL 9-1-1

If unresponsive.

STEP
3



GIVE NALOXONE:

1 spray into nostril or inject 1 vial or ampoule into arm or leg.

STEP
4



PERFORM RESCUE BREATHING AND/OR CHEST COMPRESSIONS.

STEP
5



IS IT WORKING?

If no improvement after 2-3 minutes, repeat steps 3 & 4.
Stay with them.

RECOVERY POSITION

If the person begins breathing on their own, or if you have to leave them alone, put them in the recovery position.

head should be tilted back slightly to open airway



hand supports head

knee stops body from rolling onto stomach

SIGNS OF OPIOID OVERDOSE

- Person can't be woken up
- Breathing is slow or has stopped
- Snoring or gurgling sounds
- Fingernails and lips turn blue or purple
- Pupils are tiny or eyes are rolled back
- Body is limp

Medetomidine

meh-deh-TOH-mih-deen



Medetomidine is a veterinary tranquilizer **similar to xylazine (tranq) but much stronger.**

Unlike xylazine, medetomidine use **has not been associated with wounds.**

Medetomidine **can cause deep sleepiness, a slow heart rate, low blood pressure, very low or no pulse, hallucinations.**

Medetomidine **withdrawal can cause severe and harmful high blood pressure.**

Medetomidine is **currently found in 3 of every 4 fentanyl samples** checked by Toronto's Drug Checking Service. We should **assume medetomidine is just as common in our fentanyl supply.**

Use naloxone if you think someone is overdosing; medetomidine is almost always found with fentanyl.

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Talk to us to learn more, and about drug checking!

This poster was made by Ontario's Drug Checking Community: a public health and safety program that offers the most precise, timely, and accessible information on the unregulated drug supply to reduce harm and inform evidence-based responses to the worsening toxic opioid supply crisis.

(website) www.drugchecking.community | (email) hello@drugchecking.community | (IG) [@drugchecking](https://www.instagram.com/drugchecking)