

COVID-19 Harm Reduction Tips for People Who Use Drugs

Have What You Need

- Clean supplies (syringes, pipes, etc.)
- Food and basic household needs.
- A Take Home Naloxone kit.
- All medications you might need.

Practice Safer Drug Use

- Use new, clean supplies. If you have to share, clean your supplies with alcohol wipes or use new mouthpieces to avoid spreading COVID-19.
- Wash your hands or use wipes before preparing, handling or using your drugs. Prepare the drugs yourself.
- Disinfect surfaces before preparing drugs.
- Be cautious when trying a new drug or getting a drug from a new source.

Use the Buddy System

Buddy up when you are using - in person or via text, phone or online chat. Using with a friend is safer than using alone. You can also be a buddy to those who may need extra help. Check in on your friends regularly. Help each other pick up supplies, including Take Home Naloxone.

In Person

- COVID-19 is passed via coughing or sneezing, or touching surfaces with the virus on it. Stay two arms lengths away from your friend to avoid passing the virus.
- Have everyone wash their hands when they come over, and before and after using drugs.
- Stay home if you are sick, and ask others who are sick to stay home.

Online or By Phone

- Tell your friends what drugs you are using and where you are.
- Make a plan. If you stop replying to messages from your friends, they should know to call 911 and be able to give the operator the information they need to help you.

Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Know the Risks

COVID-19 infects your lungs. Smoking can make your illness worse if you are infected with COVID-19.

- Downers like fentanyl and other opioids, gabapentin and benzodiazepines can slow your breathing rate.
- COVID-19 may increase the risk of overdose death when using downers.

Adapted from the B.C. Centre for Disease Control, B.C. Ministry of Health and Manitoba Harm Reduction Network