

# TIPS FOR SAFER SUBSTANCE USE



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Waterloo Wellington

Association canadienne  
pour la santé mentale  
Waterloo Wellington

## Harm Reduction During COVID-19



### KEEP YOUR SPACE CLEAN

Before and after use, wipe down all surfaces with antimicrobial wipes, alcohol (70%), or bleach. Remember to wipe down the drug packaging itself.

### PREPARE YOUR DRUGS YOURSELF



- Wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and water and prepare your own drugs.
- Keep your surfaces clean and wipe them down before and after use with microbial wipes, alcohol (at least 70%), or bleach.
- If you can't prepare your own drugs, stay with the person who is. Get them to wash their hands thoroughly, and to clean up before and after.



### MINIMIZE CONTACT

- Avoid groups of people and close personal contact.
- Keep your distance when purchasing and using substances.
- Wash hands before and after all contact.
- Avoid touching your face.
- If you have to cough or sneeze, do it into a tissue and dispose of it immediately.
- If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow rather than your hands.

### KNOW THE SYMPTOMS



- Symptoms of COVID-19 may be similar to cold and flu, and include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and pneumonia.
- Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after infection, so a person can be infected, and not know it. Don't assume that a person is "safe" because they don't look sick.

### STAY CLEAR IF YOU ARE SICK

- If you are sick, it is important to self-isolate and avoid all contact with people.
- Do not visit public places, and stay in your home.
- If you use needle exchange services, do not visit the location.
- Call and notify them to make arrangements to have supplies delivered.
- Use the telephone and online support options.
- Contact your local public health agency for further instructions.



### PLAN & PREPARE FOR OVERDOSE

- Emergency services might be stretched in a COVID-19 outbreak, and slow to respond to 911 calls.
- Gather a stock of naloxone and fentanyl testing strips.
- If you are alone, experiment with using less to lower your risk of overdose and go slowly.
- If you are using with others, make an overdose plan with them and stagger use if possible.
- Store a breathing mask for use in case rescue breathing is needed.

## REFERENCES

Government of Canada: [www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca)  
Harm Reduction Coalition: [www.harmreduction.org](http://www.harmreduction.org)  
Public Health Ontario: [www.publichealthontario.ca](http://www.publichealthontario.ca)