

The Positive Post

Increase in xylazine and benzodiazepines in Ontario's unregulated drug supply

The increase in xylazine (tranq dope) and frequent benzodiazepine presence in Ontario's unregulated drug supply is concerning as it may contribute to an increased risk of overdose. These substances are also often present together with opioids. The risk of overdose increases further when benzodiazepines, xylazine, and other depressants such as opioids or alcohol are taken at the same time. Symptoms of xylazine and benzodiazepine toxicity can be similar to those associated with opioids, but neither will respond to naloxone. However, administering naloxone is still advised as the substance may also contain opioids.



Symptoms of benzodiazepine toxicity and overdose can include:

- Extreme sleepiness or passing out
- Dizziness, poor balance, and poor movement control
- Slurred speech
- Memory loss
- Loss of consciousness or "blackouts"

These symptoms can last for hours.

Significant harmful effects from xylazine can include:

- Severe skin lesions, such as ulcers or abscesses by people who inject drugs
- Blurry vision, confusion, dizziness, drowsiness, difficulty moving, slurred speech and fatigue
- Very slow, or irregular breathing (or not be breathing at all)
- Low blood pressure, slower heart rate
- Death

How to respond to xylazine and/or benzodiazepine toxicity

- In all cases of suspected overdose, call 9-1-1 right away for emergency help.
- While naloxone will not have an effect on benzodiazepines or xylazine, it can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and can be safely given to people who have taken non-opioid drugs (like benzodiazepines or xylazine).
- Perform chest compressions and or rescue breathing, or CPR as needed.
- Stay with the person until emergency help arrives. The Good Samaritan Act provides some legal protection.

Resource: Stopoverdoseottawa.ca

Ask The Educator

You can submit your questions to ask the Educator via email, educationoutreach@positivepathways.com by calling our office, [519-973-0222](tel:519-973-0222) and entering extension 109, 115, 116 or 118.

Dear Educator,

I currently use drugs from our toxic drug supply. How can I prevent harm and overdose? Sincerely, Community Member

Dear Community Member,

You can prevent harms by visiting our NSP (needle syringe program) to access sterile supplies. We have safer inhalation and injection supplies to prevent risks associated with substance use. I can also recommend the following tips to provide additional resources and reminders.

1. **Don't use alone** – If you use alone and experience an overdose, nobody will be there to respond. If you are using with someone else, don't use at the exact same time.
2. **Carry naloxone** – Naloxone is a medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Naloxone kits are available at no cost in Ontario. Please visit www.wechu.org or www.ckphu.com to find out how to get a naloxone kit.
3. **If you do use alone** – Tell someone before you use. Have a safety plan which includes having someone come check on you. You can also call the [National Overdose Line](tel:1-888-688-NORS) at 1-888-688-NORS (6677) or connect with an anonymous virtual harm reduction supporter via the Brave App, thebraveapp.com. Our Harm reduction team tried the app, its easy and private.
4. **If you choose to use** – Consider visiting the [Supervised Consumption and Treatment Services](#), SafePoint, at 101 Wyandotte Street East. Keep checking our monthly newsletter for the opening dates and hours.
5. **Don't mix drugs** – Using more than one drug at a time puts you at a higher risk of overdose.
6. **Know your tolerance** – Your risk of overdose increases if you are a new user or haven't used in more than three days.
7. **Go slow** – The quality of unregulated drugs is unpredictable. Anything can be cut with Fentanyl or Carfentanil.
8. **Seek medical care for unusual skin lesions. Positive Pathways Needle Syringe Program (NSP) has wound care information cards in their abscess kits.**

I hope this information will be helpful, thank you for your question. If you require anymore information please don't hesitate to reach out at educationhr@positivepathways.com

Sincerely,
Lacie Krzemien/ PPGS Harm Reduction Education Coordinator



Dine out on Wednesday April 19.
Support people living with HIV in
your community.

Make your reservation today!

APRIL 19
AVRIL

April 2023: Calendar Dates

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
<p>Did You Know... That we can deliver harm reduction supplies direct to you. It's free and can be anonymous, if you choose. Simply call or text our mobile number, (519) 257-9646 or email us at harmreduction@positivepathways.com.</p>		<p>*Check Website for Time and Location Details: positivepathways.com</p>				1
2	3 H4, Outreach and Education 1:30pm to 3:30pm	4	5	6	7 Good Friday OFFICE CLOSED	8
9	10 Easter Monday OFFICE CLOSED	11	12	13 Victoria Place, Coffee Snacks and Chats 1:00pm to 3:00pm	14	15
16	17 H4, Outreach and Education 1:30pm to 3:30pm	18	19 A Taste for Life Peer Engagement Men's Support Group 2:00pm	20 Victoria Place, Coffee Snacks and Chats 1:00pm to 3:00pm	21	22
23	24 H4, Outreach and Education 1:30pm to 3:30pm	25	26	27 Victoria Place, Coffee Snacks and Chats 10:00am to 12:00pm	28	29
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