



# Harm Reduction: What You Can Do to Stay Safer

**The safest way to avoid harm from drugs is to not use them.**

With today's toxic drug supply, there's no guarantee of safety, as even small amounts of some substances can cause serious harm or death.

**If you choose to use, these tips may help reduce risk:**

## Avoid mixing substances



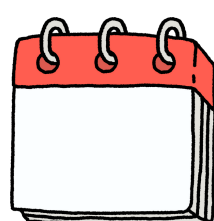
Combining drugs increases risk.  
For example (using alcohol and cannabis)

## Start low and go slow

Take a small amount first to see how it affects you. Smaller doses reduce your risk of overdose and other harms.



## Use Less, Less Often



Regular use can affect your physical and mental health. Try to space out your use and limit how much you take.

## Plan ahead and be prepared



Plan safe transportation. Operating any vehicle (e.g., car, ATV, boat) while under the influence of alcohol or drugs can put you and others at risk. Some drugs may reduce your inhibitions, for example, engaging in sexual activity.

## Hydrate, Eat, Rest

Drink water before, during, and after using. Eat beforehand to reduce nausea and other side effects. Give your body time between uses to recover. Sleep helps your brain and body repair.



## Protect Your Responsibilities



Avoid using before work or school. Substances can make it harder to focus and think clearly.



## Always have a buddy

Don't use alone. Always let someone know where you'll be and share your smartphone location with someone you trust. Make sure your friends get home safely.

## Know what you're taking



Illegal supplies may have additives like fentanyl. You can never be sure what's in your substance. Avoid unknown pills or substances. Testing kits and services can help.

## Be Emergency Ready



Know local emergency numbers. If you suspect an overdose, call for help immediately and use naloxone if available.

# Naloxone Can Save a Life!



If someone is unresponsive or breathing slowly, call 911 and use naloxone right away. When in doubt, **always** give naloxone. It will not cause harmful effects.

Some substances may be laced with opioids.

Naloxone is a medication used to **temporarily reverse the effects of opioids** such as fentanyl, morphine, oxycodone, or heroin.



To find out where you can get a free naloxone kit visit:

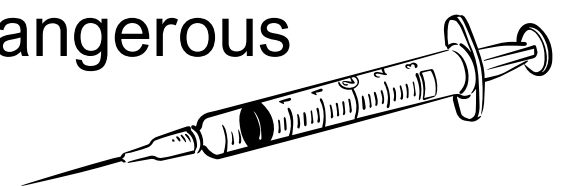
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/opioids/naloxone.html#5>



To find out how to recognize an opioid overdose and safely use naloxone, visit: <https://decyde.ca/harm-reduction/>



Reusing or sharing supplies can spread serious infections like hepatitis C. Things like needles, plastic pieces, thin glass, steel wool, or even pop cans can cause cuts or lead to dangerous infections in your lungs or heart.



## Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act

This act provides **some legal protection** for people who have witnessed an overdose and call 911 for help.

It prevents people from being charged with a controlled substance or breaching parole.



## Additional Considerations

If you or a family member have a history of schizophrenia, psychosis, depression, or substance use disorder, using substances can increase the risk of developing or worsening these conditions.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, substance use may harm your baby.



**Take a picture or screenshot this resource to make sure you have this information available when you need it.**

For more information visit us at:

[www.decyde.ca](http://www.decyde.ca)



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### References

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2. Canada, H. (2024, August 06). About the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act. Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/opioids/about-good-samaritan-drug-overdose-act.html>
3. hah RV, Shay J, Komaromy M. Harm reduction strategies for people who use drugs. JAMA. 2025;333(2):161-162. doi:10.1001/jama.2024.23605
4. Marlatt, G. A. (1996). Harm reduction: Come as you are. Addictive Behaviors, 21(6), 779-788. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0306-4603\(96\)00042-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0306-4603(96)00042-1)