



**Interior Health**  
*Every person matters*

## Important Reminders for Community Partners: Overdose Prevention

Since May this year, drug toxicity deaths continue to track upwards. We are seeing the highest numbers of monthly illicit drug toxicity deaths ever recorded in BC – 174 deaths in May, 177 in June and 175 in July. There were 24, 28 and 27 deaths in the same three months in Interior Health (IH). This represents nearly one person per day within Interior Health. IH has also seen an increase in concentrations of fentanyl and other contaminants, resulting in various community specific alerts across the region and an increase in overdoses related to inhalation.

Distribute naloxone. Promote safer use. Share the resources below.

## Overdose Prevention and Intervention Resources

### **Tips for People Who Use Substances**

Print, post and share information about safer drug use whenever possible.

[COVID19 and Safer Drug Use](#)

[Toward the Heart Safer Drug Use Tips](#)

### **Access to Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT)**

Encourage clients who use opioids to consider trying an Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) if appropriate. Share and discuss the [Opioids: A Survivor's Guide](#) document with these clients. Make a referral and support clients to attend a [local OAT Clinic](#) if they are interested in discussing their options with a physician.

### **Lifeguard App**

Ask clients to consider using the [Lifeguard App](#) if they are using substances alone. It is free and available across the province anywhere 911 calls respond to. It can be downloaded via the App Store or Google Play. The app utilizes a 50 second timer that is activated by the user before they take their dose. If the user does not stop the timer alarm, a text-to-voice call will go straight to 911 alerting medical dispatchers of a potential overdose. Instructional Video can be found [here](#).

### **Drug Checking Sites**

Talk to clients about checking their drugs before using. Information about drug checking sites and services in Interior Health is available [here](#). Take Home Drug Checking (THDC) services are available at some sites. THDC services provide people who wish to test their substances with fentanyl test strips and training on how to do the test and interpret the results. If your organization is interested in becoming a THDC site please contact [harmreduction.coordinator@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:harmreduction.coordinator@interiorhealth.ca).

## Other Considerations for Staff and Agencies

The following are some recommendations that social serving agencies can consider to reduce overdose risk.

- If you operate an Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) consider extending the hours. If there is an OPS or Supervised Consumption Site in your community, make sure your clients who substances are aware.
- If able, offer additional supports and outreach to people who use substances. Encourage people who use substances to list their triggers, stresses or challenging moments (e.g. income) and develop individualized plans to reduce risk of overdose.
- As this may be a particularly challenging time due to the risk of COVID 19, check in with people who use substances about their needs and preferences with regard to the way in which they would like to access supports (e.g. in person versus phone or virtual).
- Talk with people who use substances about safer use strategies like go low and slow, don't use alone and use the Lifeguard App.
- Increase and promote the availability of naloxone kits, training, drug checking and harm reduction supplies (including smoking supplies).
- Consider establishing [episodic overdose prevention services](#) at your site.
- Consider opportunities for the involvement of Peers in your organization or support Peers in providing outreach in your community. For more information about supporting Peers contact [Jessica.mensinger@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:Jessica.mensinger@interiorhealth.ca) or [Alison.kyte@interiorhealth.ca](mailto:Alison.kyte@interiorhealth.ca).