

RECOGNIZING DRUG TOXICITY

Different drugs cause different overdose/ drug toxicity symptoms. Knowing what to look for can help you respond quickly and appropriately in an emergency. If someone has taken more than one substance, symptoms may overlap, be mixed, or harder to recognize.

OPIOIDS AND SEDATIVES

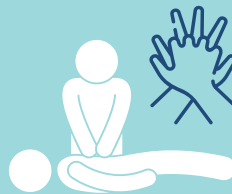
- Opioids are drugs like fentanyl, hydromorphone and “down”
- Sedatives are drugs like benzodiazepines (benzos) and tranquilizers (xylazine)
- Toxicity symptoms look similar and can include reduced or absent breathing, or falling asleep and not responding to attempts to wake
- Naloxone is a key tool in reversing opioid toxicity
- Benzos and tranquilizers do not respond to naloxone

STIMULANTS

- Includes drugs like cocaine, crystal meth or MDMA/ecstasy
- Toxicity may cause seizures, chest pain/ heart attack, stroke, dangerous overheating, or psychosis
- Helpful non-emergency support can include encouraging the person to drink water/ cooling down the body and resting in a quiet, non-stimulating place.
- Naloxone does not work on stimulant drugs, but there may be contaminants in any illicit substances.
- If someone is showing signs of opioid overdose after taking a stimulant, use naloxone

NO MATTER WHAT TYPE OF DRUG WAS USED, CALL 911 IF SOMEONE:

- Loses consciousness and can't respond
- Stops breathing and/or has difficulty breathing
- Has a seizure and:
 - it lasts longer than 5 minutes
 - they have more than one in a row
 - they have never had one before
- Has symptoms of a heart attack:
 - significant chest pain or pain in jaw, neck or back
- Has signs of a stroke:
 - numbness in face, arms or legs
 - sudden or severe headache
 - blurred vision
 - sudden lack of coordination
- Is experiencing psychosis or a mental health crisis and you are concerned about immediate harm to themselves or others



Responding to an emergency is very difficult. You may need support as well. Talk to someone about what happened and consider mental health or crisis supports. See mb.211.ca

This direction is for lay responders in the community. It is not intended for health care professionals or overdose response in the workplace where additional steps may be required.



For more information on the Manitoba
Take Home Naloxone Program visit:
manitoba.ca/naloxone

