

PUBLIC HEALTH OPIOID NOTICE



Approaches to support COVID-19 positive People Who Use Drugs

November 9, 2020

COVID-19 and the associated public health measures have elevated existing risks for people who use drugs (PWUD), including the ongoing risk for overdose and other harms related to the toxic illicit drug supply, the risk of infection and spread of infection among those with underlying health conditions and who face social marginalization, and risks due to withdrawal for those who must self-isolate to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Innovative approaches are needed to support people who use substances to stay safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Public health ethics require SWPH to redress the increased burdens PWUD experience when they have to self-isolate including support for their ongoing access to substances of their choice to prevent violation of public health orders as well as harms associated with unplanned withdrawal.

Organizations:

It is important to reinforce safe practices to PWUD during COVID-19. Refer to our [Guidance for Harm Reduction and COVID-19](#) document and share with PWUD. Reinforce the following safe practices if PWUD are self isolating:

- stock up on supplies (drugs, sterile equipment) for a 2-week period
- have a safety plan (e.g. call someone if about to use, check-in process, start low, go slow)
- train on how to use a Naloxone kit and keeping a Naloxone kit on hand
- access mobile outreach services at 226-377-7968 to deliver supplies
- prepare for unplanned withdrawal considering alternative drugs or medications that could help take the edge off
- if having to interact with individuals while self-isolating ensuring masking, physical distancing, and hand hygiene
- talk to your health care provider about safe supply or opioid replacement therapy (ORT)
- talk to your health care provider on means of maintaining ORT (e.g. virtual appointments, increased carries)