

## Signs of a Stimulants Overdose

Stimulants (Cocaine, methamphetamines, amphetamines)

Signs and symptoms of an overdose:

- Rapid heart beat, possible chest pain
- Rapid breathing, feeling short of breath
- Possible seizure, vomiting, bleeding in the brain

There is no antidote to a stimulant overdose

An overdose is a medical emergency and the first step is always to call 911.

## Signs of Opioid Overdose

Opioids (Heroin, morphine, fentanyl, methadone, oxycodone)

Signs and symptoms of an overdose:

- Breathing is very slow, or irregular, or they may not be breathing at all
- Fingernails and/or lips are blue
- Body is limp
- Deep snoring or gurgling sounds
- Loss of consciousness/passed out (can't wake the person up)
- Unresponsive (not answering when you talk to them or shake them)
- Pinpoint (tiny) pupils

**Good Samaritan Act:** people who call 911 for an overdose emergency will not be charged with possession if the drugs or paraphernalia were found as a result of calling 911 (this will not apply to other offenses such as trafficking or driving while impaired).



## Crisis Supports



COAST - 905-972-8338



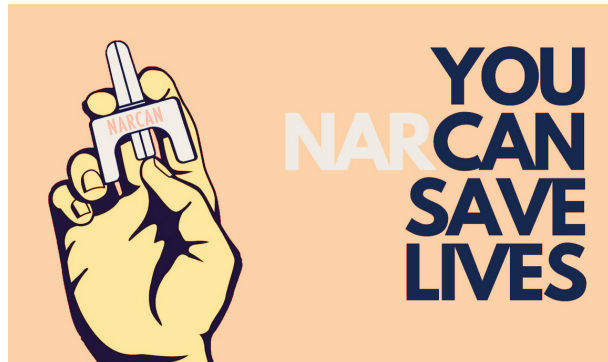
Barrett Centre 905-529-7878



National Overdose Prevention  
1-888-688-6677



National Overdose Prevention  
weloveyou@nors.ca



## Naloxone & Needle Exchange

Services in Hamilton that provide Naloxone and safe equipment

**The Van:** Confidential service that travels anywhere in Hamilton to deliver harm reduction supplies.  
text or call (905) 317-9966.

**Hamilton Urban Core:** their safe consumption site provides supervised injection services as well as treatment, and other health and social services.  
70 James St. S Hamilton

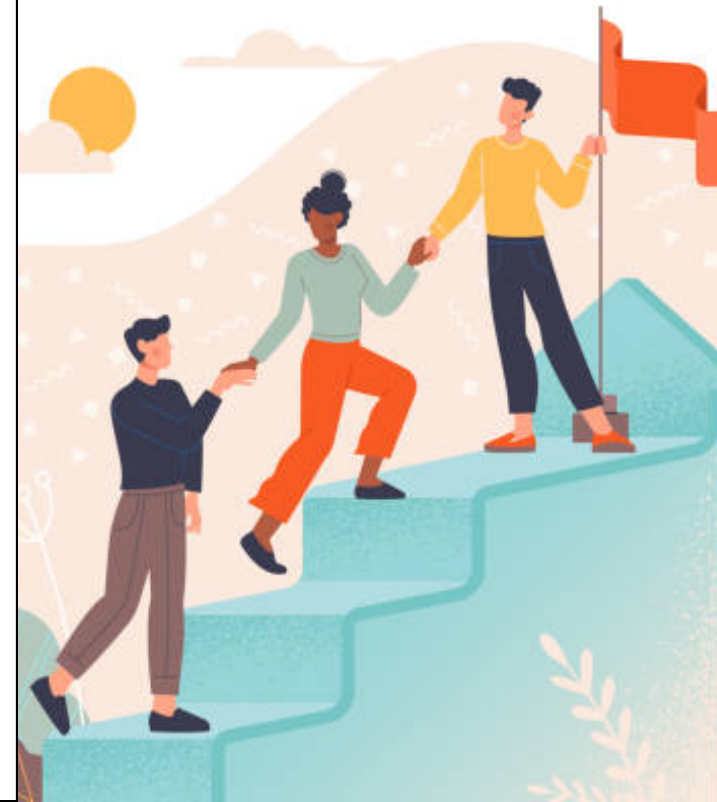
**The HUB Hamilton:** Provides access to harm reduction supplies and naloxone.  
78 Vine St, Hamilton

# YOUNG ADULT SUBSTANCE USE PROGRAM (YA-SUP)

**YA-SUP**

St. Joseph's  
Healthcare Hamilton

THE QUICK GUIDE TO HARM  
REDUCTION & OVERDOSE  
PREVENTION



# What is Harm Reduction?

Strategies used to reduce the negative and harmful effects of substance use.

## Alcohol Use

### Tips for safer use:

- Set a limit on how much you're going to drink
- Know the strength of your alcohol
- Make sure you have had something to eat
- Slow down!
- Use the buddy system
- Plan a safe way to get home

### If you're drinking:

- Don't drive
- Remember to hydrate well
- Avoid mixing
  - Mixing alcohol with any other drug is unpredictable and can put you at risk
- Avoid having sex with an unfamiliar partner

## Cannabis Use

### Tips for safer cannabis use:

- Know your supplier - try to buy from regulated dispensaries
- Try a small amount to test it first

### If you're using cannabis

- Avoid cannabis smoke if possible
- Prevent burns on your lips and fingers
  - Use a small piece of rolled unbleached cardboard as a filter
  - Cigarette filters remove 60% of the THC but leave the toxins.
- Take shallow puffs, not deep inhalations (About 95% of the THC in the smoke is absorbed in the first few seconds so you don't need to puff hard or hold your breath.)



## General Tips For All Substance Use

- Avoid mixing drugs
  - Especially alcohol, opioids and benzos
- Tolerance
  - Use less after any period of abstinence, even a few days can lower your tolerance
  - Use less if you are sick
  - Using in new environments can affect how the drug affects you and may increase the risk of overdose
- Quality
  - Test the strength of the drug before you do the whole amount
  - Try to buy from the same dealer so that you know what you're getting
- Use with others
  - Have an overdose plan
  - Leave door unlocked or slightly ajar
  - Have someone check on you
  - NORS line
- Mode of administration of the substance
  - Injecting & smoking carry increased risk of overdose
  - Consider snorting if using alone or if you have decreased tolerance
  - Oral route is safer
- Physical health
  - Stay hydrated, eat regularly, take vitamins and get enough sleep/rest when you feel worn down

## Cocaine Use



### Tips for safer use:

- Know your supplier
- Never use alone
- Pace yourself
- Test before using
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of overdose

### If you're using cocaine:

- Be prepared (clean straw) & don't share
- Be aware of your health
- Buy less so you do less

## Overdose Prevention



### Things to know!

- Opioids are depressants such as heroin, morphine, fentanyl, methadone, oxycontin
- Fentanyl is more toxic than the basic opioid. It only takes an extremely small amount of the powder form to kill someone
- Fentanyl can be in counterfeit pills made to look identical to prescription opioids (OxyContin, Percocet). It has also been reported to be in other substances such as cannabis.
- You can't see, smell, or taste fentanyl.
- Carry Naloxone – it's a medication that can reverse an overdose for a few minutes. Take-home Naloxone kits are available from YA-SUP or free at many Ontario pharmacies.

### Looking to learn more?

Visit  
<https://www.algonquincollege.com/umbrellaproject/overdose-prevention/>