

COMMUNITY DRUG ALERT

44 suspected overdoses/ drug poisonings and 1 suspected drug-related death in Waterloo Region from June 28 to July 2

Issued: July 3, 2026

Expires: July 17, 2026

- Very hot weather is expected to continue. **People who use drugs have an increased risk of death and overdose/ drug poisoning during very hot weather.**
- The street drug supply is highly toxic. **Unexpected drugs may be mixed in to any type of street drug** without people knowing.
- Sanguen's Drug Checking Program found:
 - **Fentanyl with high amounts of non-opioids (medetomidine) and opioids (para-fluorofentanyl).**
 - **Fentanyl is stronger than expected.** People who use unregulated (street) fentanyl may be at greater risk for overdose/ drug poisoning.

There are reports of:

- People experiencing unexpected reactions after using drugs (e.g. shivering, finding it hard to move). Call 911 if you are concerned.
- **Complex overdoses.** Deep sleepiness (on the nod, heavily sedated) and a very low heart rate. These are signs to go to the hospital.
- **Complex withdrawal. Signs to go to the hospital:**
 - Throwing up a lot
 - Chest pain
 - Going in and out of awareness

IF SOMEONE OVERDOSES: Call 911. Give naloxone. Stay with them until help arrives.

STAY SAFER:

- Start low and go slow.
- Don't use drugs alone.
- Use around a trusted person and take turns so one person can help if an overdose happens.
- Use the National Overdose Response Service (NORS) at 1-888-688-6677.
- Test your drugs at Sanguen (226-789-1719).
- Carry naloxone and know how to use it.
- Avoid mixing drugs – use one drug at a time.

Get a Naloxone Kit



For locations to get free naloxone and harm reduction supplies, scan the QR code, visit regionofwaterloo.ca/harmreduction, or call 519-575-440

Get Support

[HART Hub Waterloo Region](#) is available for anyone experiencing homelessness and housing instability who is interested in support/ change around their addiction. 519-745-4404 x213

Heat Warning and Drug Use

Very hot weather is expected to continue. People who use drugs have an increased risk of death and overdose/ drug poisoning during very hot weather.

Drugs can affect your body differently during hot weather:

- Stimulants (like meth) can increase body temperature making it hard to cool down.
- Opioids (like fentanyl) can cause a lot of sweating leading to dehydration.
- Dehydration and extreme heat can affect tolerance to drugs and can increase risk of death from an overdose/drug poisoning.
- Drugs can make it harder to feel how hot you are.

What to do in hot weather:

- Carry extra naloxone. Overdoses/ drug poisonings may happen more easily in extreme heat.
- Start low and go slow: Your tolerance may be affected by the heat.
- Drink water even if you're not thirsty. Sports drinks can help if you're sweating a lot. Drink extra water when using drugs or alcohol.
- Visit [Cooling Spaces](#) to cool down. Scan the QR code for Locations and hours (including interactive map):
- Use cool cloths on your forehead, back of neck and armpits to cool down.
- Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes and move to cooler, shaded areas.
- Dehydration can cause cracked/dry lips. Use a mouthpiece and avoid sharing pipes to prevent the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C.



Watch for the effects of heat illness:

- Light-headed or headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Very thirsty
- Problems swallowing
- Peeing less with unusually dark yellow urine
- Heat rash, unusual swelling or cramps

Call 911 if someone has:

- Passed out or won't wake up
- Severe nausea and vomiting
- Fast breathing and fast heartbeat

Drugs found through Sanguen Health Centre's Drug Checking Program

FOUND IN FENTANYL

People who use unregulated (street) fentanyl may be at greater risk.

Opioids, tranquilizers, or benzodiazepine mixed with any of these drugs increases risk for overdose/ drug poisoning because their dangerous effects become stronger when they are together.

Medetomidine

- **What is it?** [A strong sedative](#), like xylazine but much stronger. Not an opioid.
- **Effects:** Last a long time (90 minutes or several hours).
 - Deep sleepiness (on the nod, heavily sedated).
 - Passing out. People may be hard to wake up.
 - Slow breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure.
 - May cause hallucinations or confusion.
 - Dizziness, nausea, vomiting.
- **Medetomidine Withdrawal:** Can start quickly and be very serious. **Signs to go to the hospital:**
 - can't stop throwing up.
 - chest pain.
 - going in and out of awareness

Para-fluorofentanyl

- **What is it?** [Unregulated fentanyl-like drug \(opioid\)](#).
 - Test your drugs with fentanyl test strips. A positive result could mean para-fluorofentanyl or other types of fentanyl are in your drugs.
- **Effects:**
 - Deep sleepiness (on the nod, heavily sedated).
 - Passing out. People may be hard to wake up.
 - Slow breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure

Fentanyl

- **What is it?** [A strong opioid](#).
 - Test your drugs with fentanyl test strips. A positive result could mean fentanyl is in your drugs.
 - Fentanyl was found to be stronger than expected. People who use unregulated (street) fentanyl may be at greater risk for overdose/ drug poisoning.
- **Effects:**
 - Slows breathing and heart rate.
 - People may be hard to wake up (heavily sedated).
 - Memory loss
 - Feeling of a stiff or tight chest

What to do:

- Stay with anyone on the nod and watch for [signs of an overdose](#).
- Follow the [5 steps to respond to an opioid overdose](#):
 1. **Shout** their name and shake their shoulders.
 2. **Call 911** if they won't wake up or if breathing is very slow or not at all.
 3. **Give naloxone**.
 - Para-fluorofentanyl is an opioid. Naloxone will work on para-fluorofentanyl.
 - Medetomidine is not an opioid. Naloxone cannot stop the effects of medetomidine. Give naloxone because it will work on opioids that may be mixed in the drugs.
 4. Check that the person is breathing regularly. They may not wake up right away. **Perform rescue breathing or give oxygen** if you can.
 5. Additional doses of naloxone may be needed. Give another dose every 2-3 minutes until breathing is back to normal.
- If they are very sedated (sleepy) but still breathing, encourage them to keep breathing.
- Stay with them until help arrives.



Scan the QR code to [sign up](#) to get community drug alerts for Waterloo Region to your inbox.



The unregulated drug supply is highly toxic. We don't know if the drugs found by the Drug Checking Program are the same ones involved in the suspected overdoses.

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