COMMUNITY DRUG ALERT

35 suspected overdoses/ drug poisonings and 2 suspected drug-related deaths in Waterloo Region from November 8 to November 11. Reports of very heavy sedation.

Issued: November 12, 2026 **Expires: November 26, 2026**

The street drug supply is highly toxic. Any type of street drug may be different than expected and may cause unexpected reactions. **Drugs appear to be cut or mixed with other substances that you may not expect, taste, or see.**

There are reports of an **increase in more intense and unexpected reactions:**

- **Complex overdoses.** Signs to go to the hospital:
  - Deep sleepiness (very heavily sedated) and really hard to wake up
  - Very low heart rate and very slow or no breathing
  - Seizures
- **Complex withdrawal leading to hospitalization.** Signs to go to the hospital:
  - Throwing up a lot
  - Chest pain
  - Going in and out of awareness

People who use unregulated (street) fentanyl may be at greater risk for overdose/ drug poisoning. Sanguen's Drug Checking Program found:

- **Fentanyl mixed with non-opioids (Medetomidine and Benzodiazepines)**
- **Naloxone cannot stop the effects of medetomidine or benzodiazepines.** Call 911 and give naloxone because it will work on opioids that may be mixed in the drugs.

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 the National Overdose Response Service (NORS) at 1-888-688-6677.
- Use around a trusted person and take turns so one person can help if an overdose happens.
- 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	Get Support
For locations to get free naloxone and harm reduction supplies, scan the QR code, visit regionofwaterloo.ca/harmreduction, or call 519-575-440	HART Hub Waterloo Region is available for anyone experiencing homelessness and housing instability who is interested in support/ change around their use. 519-745-4404 x213

Scan the QR code to sign up to get community drug alerts for Waterloo Region to your inbox.

Drugs found through Sanguen Health Centre's

Drug Checking Program

DRUGS 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.

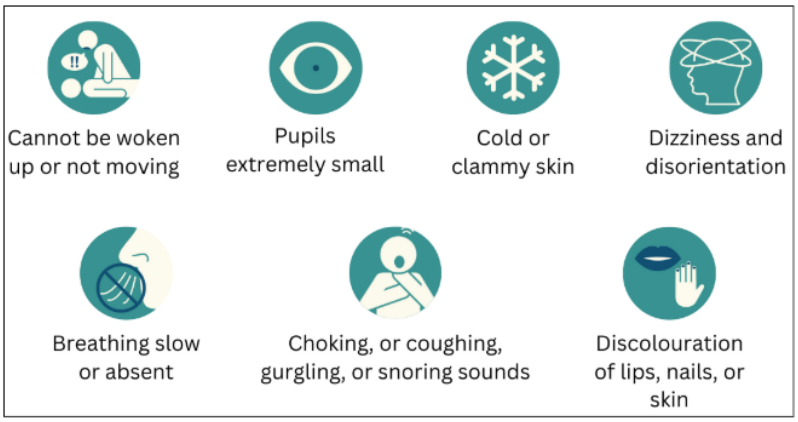
Medetomidine

- **What is it?** A strong sedative, like xylazine but much stronger. **Not an opioid.**
- Test your drugs with Medetomidine test strips. A positive result could mean Medetomidine are in your drugs.
- **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

Benzodiazepine ("benzo")

- **What is it?** A strong sedative. **Not an opioid.**
- Test your drugs with benzodiazepine test strips. A positive result could mean Benzodiazepines 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.
    - Blackouts (memory loss).
    - Slurred speech, trouble focusing eyes, poor balance

Overdose Response:



- 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**.
        - Medetomidine and benzodiazepines are not opioids. **Naloxone cannot stop the effects of medetomidine or benzodiazepines.** 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.

Supporting someone who is sedated (on the nod)

- Move the person to a safe place, ideally somewhere warm and dry.
- Stay with them and keep an eye on them.
- Check that limbs are not restricted.
- If they are having trouble breathing or not breathing, call 911, give rescue breaths.

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