

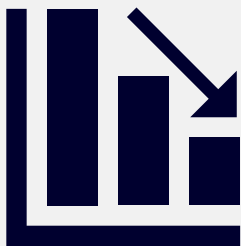
Opioid Awareness and Education Still Needed



OPIOID FATALITIES TRENDING DOWN

According to the provincial government, 98 people in Alberta died from an opioid overdose in June 2022 — a 20% decrease over May and a 44% decrease compared to November 2021, when the number of deaths peaked. In BC, 146 people died in June compared with a peak of 212 in January, which equates to a 31% drop.

Source: [CBC News, Calgary](#)



The opioid crisis is still a reality, and it is critical to continue raising awareness and education.

Fast facts



Opioid poisoning can happen any time and to anyone: a colleague, friend or loved one.



Opioids affect the part of your brain that controls your breathing.



Nearly 27,000 opioid-related deaths, **most of which were accidental**, were reported between January 2016 and September 2021.

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada



WHAT ARE OPIOIDS?

Opioids are drugs with pain relieving properties. Sometimes they induce euphoria (feeling high), which can increase the risk of people using them improperly.

Legal opioids are prescribed by a health care professional most often to treat pain from conditions such as injuries, surgery, dental procedures, or long-term chronic pain.

Examples include:

- Codeine
- Fentanyl
- Morphine
- Oxycodone
- Hydromorphone
- Medical heroin

They can also be produced or obtained illegally, including opioids given to you by someone who is not your health care provider or street drugs from a drug dealer.



Opioid Awareness and Education Still Needed

What employers can do

Talk about it with employees. Raise awareness of the risk of accidental overdoses and reduce the stigma around safe opioid use.

Train staff in overdose recognition and the use of naloxone.

Conduct a risk assessment.

Equip offices and vehicles with naloxone kits.

Promote the use of employee assistance programs (EAPs) and return-to-work programs.

Resources

- **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)** | [Opioids in the Workplace](#)
- **Red Cross**
 - [First Aid for Opioid Poisoning Emergencies](#) - free, self-directed online course
 - [How to recognize the signs of opioid poisoning and how you can help](#)
- **Find a naloxone kit**
 - [Alberta](#)
 - [British Columbia](#)
 - [Saskatchewan](#)
- **Health Canada** | [Opioids](#)



KNOW THE BASICS

What to look for

Common signs of opioid poisoning include:

- Slowed breathing or no breathing
- Chest tightness
- Unresponsiveness or extreme drowsiness
- Pale or blue/grey skin or lips
- Small pupils
- Choking or snoring sounds

What to do

1. Call 9-1-1
2. Administer naloxone.
3. Try to keep the person awake and breathing.
4. Lay the person on their side to prevent choking.
5. Stay with the person until emergency assistance arrives.

What is naloxone?

Naloxone, also known by the trade name Narcan, is a medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and allow time for medical help to arrive.

Naloxone kits

Most provincial health authorities offer free training and can provide naloxone kits.

