

Tips to Keep Safer When Using Substances



Photo by Thomas Stephen on Splash

Before you use

- [Check your drugs](#) to get a sense of what you are using.
- Let someone know when you are using so they can check on you. There are several ways to do this, as follows.



In-person

Have another person with you when you use, like a buddy system.



With an app

Use an app, like the [LifeGuard App](#), which will alert emergency services when you don't respond.



Use the [Brave App](#). A supportive person will stay on the line with you while you use.



On the phone

Call a friend and keep the line open while using.

Call the [National Overdose Response Service](#) at **1-888-688-NORS** (1-888-688-6677). Connect with someone while you use.

- If you are inside a room leave the door slightly open, if you feel safer doing this. That way someone can get in the room if you need help.
- When possible, have someone with you who has naloxone and can give it, or can give you rescue breaths and call 911.
- Sign up to get [Toxic drug alerts](#) sent to you.



When you use

- Go slow. Take a small amount and see what effect it has on you.



Go even slower if this is the first time you are trying a **new drug** or a **different way** of taking the drug. The way you take a drug changes its strength and potency.

- Stagger your use when using with others. That way you can help each other in case of toxic drug poisoning.
- Be cautious when mixing substances. Check out drugcocktails.ca.



Mixing benzodiazepines and opioids can cause slowed breathing and possible death. Some substances are contaminated with benzodiazepines.

- Take breaks. Get some food. Drink some water. Check in with your friends.
- If you are given naloxone, make sure you are with someone for a few hours. Stay with a friend, or ask your building staff or health care worker to check on you.



Naloxone only lasts 30 to 90 minutes. That means you can overdose again once it has worn off.

After you use

- Get support if you have had either of the following:
 - You or a friend has had a toxic drug poisoning.
 - You are taking a break after a period of using.
- Check in with your community supports or a healthcare provider. They can help you with your physical and mental health.
- Do activities you enjoy. Spend time with friends.
- Take steps to be safer when you use again. The risk of toxic drug poisoning is higher if you have already had an overdose.

Find more information on Fraser Health's [Stay Safer](#) webpage.

