

COMMUNITY DRUG ALERT

48 suspected overdoses/ drug poisonings and 1 suspected drug-related death in Waterloo Region from September 14-17

Issued: September 18, 2026

Expires: October 2, 2026

- The street drug supply is highly toxic: street drugs may be different than expected and may cause unexpected reactions.
- People who use unregulated (street) fentanyl may be at greater risk for overdose/ drug poisoning. Sanguen's Drug Checking Program found:
 - **Fentanyl with high amounts of Medetomidine.** Drugs may not be evenly mixed, so some parts may have much higher amounts of medetomidine than others (**hotspots**).
 - Fentanyl mixed with other opioids (Para-fluorofentanyl)
 - Fentanyl is stronger than expected
 - Yellow as colour of concern. Be cautious using **yellow powdered drugs**.

There are reports of:

- **Very strong sedation happening very quickly after using drugs** (ex: after one inhale) and **needing more naloxone**.
- **Concerns with cocaine:** Being unresponsive, very slow breathing, and pinpoint pupils after using cocaine.
- **Complex overdoses.** Signs to go to the hospital:
 - Deep sleepiness (very heavily sedated) and really hard to wake up
 - Very low heart rate
- **Complex withdrawal leading to hospitalization.** Signs to go to the hospital:
 - Throwing up a lot
 - Chest pain
 - Going in and out of awareness
 - Very high heart rate and blood pressure

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



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 use. 519-745-4404 x213

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.**
- **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

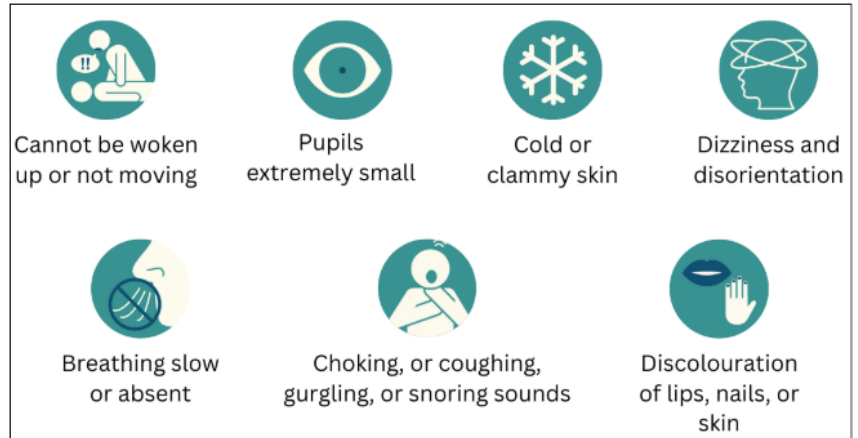
- **What is it?** [Unregulated fentanyl-like drug \(opioid\).](#)
 - Test your drugs with fentanyl test strips. A positive result could mean para-fluorofentanyl or other types of fentanyl are in your drugs.
- **Effects:**
 - Deep sleepiness (on the nod, heavily sedated).
 - Passing out. People may be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

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**.
 - Fentanyl and para-fluorofentanyl are opioids. Naloxone will work on these drugs.
 - 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.

