



A PROJECT BY

CAMS

**COMITÉ D'ACTION MONTRÉALAIS
SUR LES SURDOSES**

A Montréal-wide committee on overdose issues

MORE INFORMATION HERE :

<http://linktr.ee.com/toms.mtl>

CAMS

LE COMITÉ D'ACTION MONTRÉLAIS SUR LES SURDOSES

The CAMS is a committee supported by the TOMS and brings together 21 organizations working with people who use drugs. We are mobilized to prevent overdoses, whether or not they are fatal.

PROJET ACCÈS NALOXONE

The Access Naloxone Project aims to make naloxone available at all times throughout Montréal. By pinpointing businesses and bars/restaurants, we hope that people will be able to intervene quickly by administering naloxone in the event of an overdose due to opioid use. Just as first aid kits and defibrillators are available in many public places, we feel that naloxone should be as well.

The project, via storefront signage and flyers, seeks to bolster solidarity for people who use drugs while helping improve their safety. The project responds to a request from several local business owners who want to know how to respond to overdoses, given that using is occurring in their store/business, in alleys, or in their work environment.



CONTEXT

The sheer number of overdoses have been increasing for several years. They affect everyone, regardless of the type of use, age, social class, etc.

Naloxone is the antidote to an opioid overdose. However, for some time now, substances such as cocaine and other stimulants have been contaminated by opioids (fentanyl being the most known, but is not the only one). You never really know what you're taking and there are risks of overdose.

Overdoses can happen everywhere, not only at the location where the drug was consumed, but also after the fact.

DEFINITIONS

Opioids: are synthetic or natural psychotropic substances in the category of depressants. Several pain medications fall in this category, such as dilaudid, fentanyl or morphine as well as heroin. Overdose causes respiratory distress and loss of consciousness.

**Note that any non-controlled substance could potentially be contaminated with opioids.*

Naloxone: is an antidote to opioid overdoses; it is administered intramuscularly with a needle or intranasally with a nasal spray. It is safe to administer naloxone to a person even if they are not in an overdose situation, therefore there is no risk of causing more harm when administering naloxone to someone who has the same symptoms of an overdose. Naloxone must be kept at room temperature since it can freeze in the extreme cold, therefore supplying them in businesses where they can be stored in ideal conditions is a highlight to this project.

OVERDOSES

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AN OPIATE OVERDOSE

Anyone using opioids, even in small quantities, is at risk of overdose.

In recent years, many overdoses have been induced by the contamination of fentanyl or other opioids in other drugs or sold as such, including heroin, oxycodone, cocaine and ecstasy/MDMA.

Signs of opioids overdose:

- Blue or gray lips or fingernails
- Dizziness, disorientation
- Choking, gasping or snoring noises
- They're making sounds like gasping for air, gurgling or snoring
- Slow or unsteady breathing, or breathing appears to have ceased
- Drowsiness or difficulty staying awake

In case of suspected overdose?

- ***Call 911***
- ***Administer naloxone if available***
- ***Give first aid if needed and stay with the person until help arrives***

The *Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act* legally protects you, even if you have used or are carrying drugs. You can save a life.

Reference:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/opioid-overdose-poster.html>

LAW OF EFFECT

When a person uses a substance, a number of factors can influence the effects experienced. This is known as the Law of effect.

Three factors to consider:

- **Who is consuming?** (age, weight, state of physical, psychological or mental health, consumption habits, etc.)
- **What is being consumed?** (quantity and quality of the substance, absorption rate, how was it consumed, is it a mixture? etc.)
- **In what context is it consumed?** (Known and/or safe location, with whom, under what circumstances, etc.)

The effect of the substance varies according to the three factors mentioned. It is almost impossible to predict this effect precisely, because it depends on these parameters. Experiences can therefore differ from one person to the next, as well as from one dose to the next in the same person. to the same person.

Reference: <https://www.aidedroque.ca/en/the-law-of-effect/>

LAW OF EFFECT



PERSON

physical health, genetics, height and weight, mental health, expectations, past consumption experiences, state of mind at the time of consumption, etc.



SUBSTANCE

Consumption patterns, quantities, mixtures, frequencies, substance composition, etc.



CONTEXT

Physical (space) and social environment (alone, with friends or strangers), time of day, atmosphere, level of comfort and feeling safety, laws and regulations, etc.

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OVERDOSES (MORE ON)

LAW : THE GOOD SAMARITAN ACT

The purpose of **the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act** is to provide types of protection for anyone assisting another person who has overdosed or is witnessing an overdose. It applies to such cases as:

- Even if you are forbidden from carrying a controlled substance (drugs), even if the ban is written into the terms of your bail conditions, probation, parole or respite.

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act applies to anyone seeking emergency assistance in the event of an overdose, including the person undergoing an overdose.

The Act **protects the person seeking help** regardless of whether he or she stays or leaves the scene/location of the overdose before help arrives. The Act also protects anyone who remains on the scene until help arrives.

However, **the law does not provide legal protection for more serious offences** such as:

- outstanding warrants;
- production and trafficking of controlled substances;
- any other crimes not specified in the Act.

When the life of a person overdosing is in danger, the law instructs witnesses to:

1. Call emergency services (911).
2. Administer **naloxone** if an opioid overdose is suspected.
3. Provide **first aid to the best of your ability** until emergency services arrive.
4. Remain calm and **reassure the person** until help arrives.

Source:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/opioids/about-good-samaritan-drug-overdose-act.html>



NALOXONE

HOW TO ADMINISTER NALOXONE

RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE OPIOID OVERDOSE

The person might have used medications or illicit drugs and shows the following signs:

- No response to sound or pain
- Laboured or snore-like breathing, or absence of breathing

The person seems to be unconscious

1 TRY MAKING THEM RESPOND TO SOUND OR PAIN

YELL their name **TALK TO THEM** loudly

RUB the centre of their chest (sternum) hard

They are unresponsive

2 CALL OR HAVE SOMEONE CALL 911

IF YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN WITHOUT A PHONE:

- Administer a dose of naloxone
- Perform chest compressions for 2 min
- Lay the person on their side
- Find a way to call 911 and follow instructions

They are unresponsive

3 ADMINISTER A DOSE OF NALOXONE

A Lay the person on their back. Tilt head backwards, supporting neck.

B Remove nasal spray from box, don't test it. **HOLD IT** like this

C Insert tip into one nostril. Press firmly with your thumb.

They are unresponsive

4 PERFORM CHEST COMPRESSIONS IMMEDIATELY

GIVE 2 compressions (5 cm deep) per second

START giving CPR if you have been trained, using the barrier mask

They are unresponsive 3 min after administration

5 ADMINISTER ANOTHER DOSE OF NALOXONE IN THE OTHER NOSTRIL

REPEAT STEPS 4 AND 5 as long as the person is unresponsive

Out of naloxone? Continue chest compressions or CPR until help arrives

IF THE PERSON WAKES UP/REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS...

- Turn the person's body on their side: explain what has just happened and talk about the importance of being seen by a healthcare professional.
- Tell them they shouldn't take opioids in the next few hours to avoid another overdose (After an overdose, the risk of another one is high, as naloxone only acts for a short period of time).
- Stay with the person until help arrives. *The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act provides a level of protection for witnesses or victims of overdose.*

Source image: <https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/fichiers/2021/21-233-08WA.pdf>

NALOXONE (MORE ON)

HOW TO STORE NALOXONE

It is strongly recommended that **naloxone be stored at room temperature**. The best place to store it is near your first-aid kit and/or your automated external defibrillator (AED). This way, all your first-aid equipment will be easily accessible for you or your staff.

Like all pharmaceutical products, **naloxone has an expiration date**. If you have a date-tracking calendar in your business, it may be a good idea to add the date of your kit to it.

** Note that even expired naloxone is still worth administering: it will be less effective but not entirely so..*

HOW TO OBTAIN NALOXONE

To obtain naloxone, the *Free access to naloxone and certain other supplies program* allows anyone to receive a kit containing two nasal sprays from your local pharmacy.

** If you are having trouble obtaining it, contact us to discuss your options.*

Note for pharmacists:

For a third party who can intervene with an opioid user, the **medication access program RAMQ “code”** to be indicated on the claim form is **8L**. The billing code must correspond to the product served for a third party.



HOW LOCAL BUSINESSES CAN HELP

As a business owner, you have can make a difference in the overdose crisis in three main ways:

TRAINING

You and your team can acquire the skills needed to respond to an opioid overdose by getting trained on administering naloxone. Several organizations in Montréal offer this training at no or low cost. There is also training available to normalize sensitivity for homelessness and solidarity with people living through it. Contact us for more information.

RAISING AWARENESS

Training makes your business an agent of change in the community. You'll help improve awareness of the issues, solidarity with your neighbours, and debunk some of the myths about the overdose crisis. Learning and applying these skills and tips will help reduce the harms of criminalized substance use.

SUPPORT

Community organizations and the people they support are often the victims of negative comments. By positioning yourself as a business in solidarity with their mission, you're helping to create a community united by solidarity and caring. Sometimes, all it takes is signing a letter of support or taking part in their associative life to facilitate their activities and combat prejudice against the most marginalized people.

REFERENCES

The contact information of a resource person is provided in the package in the event that your workplace needs some guidance related to the naloxone kit, interventions and overdoses.

Please note that this is not an emergency number with 24/7 availability, it is simply provided if more information is needed.

If someone shows signs of overdose always call 9-1-1.

More on TOMS

TOMS Table des organismes communautaires
montréalais de lutte contre le sida

The mission of the **La Table des organismes communautaires montréalais de lutte contre le VIH / sida (TOMS)** is to support, promote the actions and defend the interests of its members and the communities they represent.

<http://toms-mtl.org>

Follow us on social medias:

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Harm Reduction Community Liaison:

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To know more about
harm reduction in Montréal