

# Strategies to avoid or respond to opioid overdoses



The risk of having an overdose, and of dying from overdose, has increased over the past few years. One of the reasons why is the increased presence of fentanyl, a very strong opioid, in the drug supply. If you are in settings where drugs may be used, these important strategies could help save your life or the lives of others.

## If you use drugs:



- **Assume fentanyl:** Assume any drugs that you don't purchase directly from a pharmacy or cannabis dispensary, including pills or powdered drugs that look like cocaine, contain fentanyl. Fentanyl might be in your drugs, even if they test negative using test strips. For more information about fentanyl, [go here](#).



- **Go low, go slow:** If you are using drugs, try to use one drug at a time and start with a low amount of what you are using – you can always put more in your body, but you can't take it out once it's there.



- **Carry naloxone:** Carry at least two doses of naloxone and let someone else know you have it and where they can find it. Naloxone works on all opioids, including fentanyl. To find naloxone near you, go [here](#).



- **Use the buddy system:** Use with someone else whenever possible. If you can't or don't want to use with someone, consider asking a friend or family member to check on you, or call a service like **Never Use Alone:** (800) 484-3731.



- **Know the signs:** The signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose are blue or gray lips or fingernails, trouble breathing or not breathing, not waking up.



- **Act fast:** Fentanyl overdose happens fast. If you see an overdose, respond quickly. Call 9-1-1, administer naloxone, and provide rescue breathing. For more information on how to respond, visit [here](#). The Good Samaritan Law offers some legal protections for people who experience and respond to overdoses. More information about the Good Samaritan Law is available [here](#).