

Safer Substance Use: Keeping Well During the Pandemic

Things are tough right now. Many of us turn to substances when we are isolated, lonely, and bored to relax and reduce our stress. Research shows that substance use has increased during the pandemic. Changes in routine affect our use. Because of this, the WGDS is sharing information to help you use more safely during COVID-19.

Cannabis



Trust your source – legal cannabis products bought from the government are safer than cannabis bought from a dealer or friend. Street drug content is changing due to border closures. Buying government cannabis can help ensure consistency and safety.



Start at the lowest possible level of THC and then work your way up until you achieve your desired result. High levels of THC can cause hallucinations and paranoia



Choose lower strength products – such as those with lower concentrations of THC, or products with a higher ratio of CBD to THC



Use natural cannabis products over synthetic cannabis products – synthetic cannabis products (ex. K2, spice) can be toxic



Choose vaping or consuming edibles over smoking cannabis – vaping and consuming edibles are not risk-free, but are safer for your lungs than smoking cannabis. If you do smoke cannabis – avoid inhaling deeply or holding your breath – take shallow puffs



Avoid driving a car or operating machinery after using cannabis or while you still feel the effects of cannabis – call a taxi, Uber, or have a friend give you a ride



Avoid mixing cannabis with medications or alcohol

Alcohol

Follow the safe drinking guidelines. Canadian health experts recommend that: If you're a man, have no more than 3 standard drinks a day on most days and no more than 15 drinks a week. If you're a woman, have no more than 2 standard drinks a day on most days and no more than 10 drinks a week.



A Standard drink: 1 - 12oz beer (5%) 1 - 5oz glass of wine (12%) 1- 1.5oz distilled spirit (rum, gin, etc.)(40%)

Sip a glass of water or juice between drinks



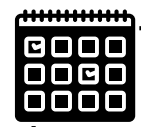
Eat before drinking or while drinking



Wait at least an hour between drinks



On 2 days of the week, do not drink at all to ensure that your tolerance to alcohol doesn't increase



Other Drugs/Illicit Drugs



If you are using drugs purchased from a dealer or the street, please be extra cautious. The toxicity of street drugs is increasing. Your drug of choice may be laced with substances you don't want to use. Filler materials may be toxic or contaminated.

To Reduce Risk:

Start low, go slow

- Start with a small amount of your drug, wait, and then try a bit more, wait. Repeat as necessary.

Don't use alone

- Use the Consumption and Treatment Services Site (CTS)
 - Located at the Guelph Community Health Centre 176 Wyndham St. N, Downtown Guelph, Baker St. entrance
 - **Mon – Sun: First entry at 9:00am Last entry at 4pm**
 - Staffed by peer workers and nurses, the CTS is a space where you can inject safely in a supervised booth that is physically distant from others. You can also pick up harm reduction supplies.
- Call the Overdose Prevention Line
 - 1 888 853 8542
 - **Mon – Fri: 12 pm – 10pm and Sat – Sun: 12pm – 12am**
 - A peer volunteer will stay on the line with you while you use drugs. They will ask some basic questions about your location so that they can call 911 in case of an emergency.

Harm Reduction Supplies

• Guelph Community Health Centre

- 176 Wyndham St. N, Downtown Guelph, Baker St. entrance
- **Mon– Sun: 9am-4:30pm**
- Pick up new harm reduction supplies, sharps containers and connect with peer workers and front-line outreach staff.

• OATC

- 146 Wyndham St. N
- **Mon-Fri: 8:30am – 4pm (3pm on Wed)**
- **Sat– Sun: 9am - noon**
- Pick up new harm reduction supplies and sharps containers.

• Community Health Van

- **Thursdays:** 6pm at Royal City Mission, 50 Quebec St.
- 7 pm at 90 Carden St.
- **Fridays:** 2 pm at Holiday Inn Suites, 540 Silvercreek Pkwy N.- delivering orders
- Access many harm reduction services from the van – nursing care, testing, harm reduction supplies and more.

If you find a discarded syringe:

- Use tongs or pliers to place the syringe in a hard container such as a plastic bottle or a sharps container.
- Never use your bare hands to touch a used syringe, and never try to replace a cap on a needle.
- There is a sharps disposal kiosk located at the rear entrance of the Guelph Community Health Centre, or at the receiving doors at WDG Public Health.
- If you are unable to dispose of this syringe yourself please send an email to outreach@archguelph.ca with location and photos if possible.