

COVID-19: Community Members Responding to Overdose

COVID-19 is a virus spread by droplets (from coughs and sneezes) entering your eyes, nose and mouth, or by touching a surface with droplets on it, then touching your face.

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How do I protect myself?

Personal protective equipment (PPE) for droplets and contact precautions when responding to overdose (OD):



Handwashing is your best protection!



Surgical mask



Eye protection



Gown



Gloves

What if I don't have that stuff?

- > Wear any **gloves** you have.
- > Wear a **homemade mask or bandana** (as long as it's not wet!).
- > Protect your eyes from droplets by using **glasses, goggles or sunglasses**.
- > **Cover your clothes** so they don't get droplets on them (with a larger shirt/apron/overall, etc.).
- > **Clean your hands after with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.**

WHEN RESPONDING TO AN OVERDOSE IN THE COMMUNITY

The risk of infection with COVID-19 is much lower than the very high risk of brain injury or death during an overdose. Taking basic precautions will minimize the risk of infection of both the person who overdoses and the responder. Remember your SAVE ME steps, and use the PPE you have and the gloves and mask in the kit.

IN THE EVENT OF AN OVERDOSE

Put on PPE if available. Wash hands and wear gloves.

Stimulate the person. Try and rouse the person, and support encourage them to take big breaths.

Call 9-1-1. It is always important to get help.

If there is no response, **administer naloxone.** Give a double dose of naloxone (two vials) to help folks wake up faster.

Provide rescue breaths to restore oxygen to the brain, and administer additional naloxone as needed.

When using a take-home naloxone kit or facility overdose response box:

- Use the face shield/breathing barrier to give rescue breaths.
- The face shield has a one-way valve and covers a lot of the face which protects the responder from droplets.
- After responding, dispose of the face shield before taking off the gloves, and wash your hands thoroughly.

Re-evaluate breathing. Give further doses of naloxone as needed.

Start hands-on CPR if required. If the person's heart stops, use hands-only chest compressions while lightly covering the person's nose and mouth with a handkerchief or T-shirt. Anyone not responding to the overdose should leave the room or immediate area.

And when paramedics arrive?

STAY at a distance and follow the directions of the responders who arrive.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER THE OVERDOSE?



1 CPR Mask – Touching ONLY the top side of the THN/FORB kit mask (facing up to responder), discard in regular garbage.



2 Gloves – Grasp palm area of one gloved hand and peel off first glove. Slide fingers of hand under other glove at wrist and peel off, and discard in regular garbage.



3 Wash your hands



4 Gown – Unfasten ties, pull gown away from neck and shoulders, touching ONLY the inside of the gown. Turn gown inside out, roll into a bundle, and place in laundry, or, if gown is disposable, gently place in garbage receptacle.



5 Wash your hands.



6 Eye protection – Do NOT touch the front of goggles, etc., and clean with disinfectant wipes.



7 Wash your hands.



8 Mask – Grasp ties or elastics at back and remove WITHOUT touching the front, and discard in regular garbage.



9 Wash your hands Washing your hands is your best protection against COVID-19. Please wash your hands and stay well. We need you!

HOW DO I CLEAN REUSABLE STUFF?

1 Gown – Fabrics (e.g. clothes, towels, etc.) can be stored in a sealed or fabric bag to go in the laundry/hot wash, when possible.

2 At the end of your shift – Change your outfit and your shoes.

3 Eye protection – Wash it, disinfect it and rinse it after every use.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- > [BCCDC People who use substances](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/priority-populations/people-who-use-substances)
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/priority-populations/people-who-use-substances>
- > [COVID-19](http://www.vch.ca/covid-19)
<http://www.vch.ca/covid-19>
- > [VCH COVID-19 substance use resources](https://sneezesdiseases.com/covid-19-community-resources)
<https://sneezesdiseases.com/covid-19-community-resources>