
Crack-cocaine containing traces of carfentanil

The Direction régionale de santé publique du CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (DRSP de Montréal) is concerned about risk of overdose and death associated with the consumption of crack containing traces of carfentanil, an opioid toxic at low-dose. Four related overdose events have been reported in the last two weeks. Individuals experienced unusual symptoms when using the substance (drowsiness, dizziness, nausea and nodding) that were reversed by administering naloxone. One person had to be transported by ambulance.

It's highly unusual to find an opioid in a stimulant like crack-cocaine. The phenomenon is not widespread. However, this reinforces the importance for stimulant users not to use alone and for those accompanying them to have naloxone and know how to use it.

Regardless of the substance consumed, naloxone is indicated when a person :

- **Has difficulty breathing, makes a snore-like gurgling noise or is not breathing at all.**
- **Reacts minimally or not at all to noise and pain.**

The person may also present cyanosis (bluish lips and fingernails) and miosis (pinpoint pupils). These symptoms are likely to progress to **cardiorespiratory arrest**. In case of overdose, call 911 immediately for a rapid and effective intervention and administer naloxone if available. Hospital care may be required for naloxone administration under medical supervision or for airway management.

The DRSP de Montréal urges street-drug users to be cautious, **regardless of consumption method** (inhalation, injection or other). It also encourages clinicians and care providers to increase overdose prevention interventions targeting users in the following ways:

1. Inform street drug users of the risks of consuming contaminated crack-cocaine.

2. Provide counselling on safer drug use practices:

- **Avoid using alone** (or, notify someone and stay in contact when using, e.g.: **National Overdose Response Service (NORS) 1-888-688-6677**).
- When several people are using, **avoid using all at the same time**.
- **Have naloxone available** in large enough quantities and know how to use it if someone shows signs of overdose. In case of doubt, don't hesitate to use it (naloxone is not dangerous even if it isn't necessary).
- **Reduce the dose of a drug to test its effects.**
- **Avoid sharing inhalation supplies with others.**
- Use [supervised consumption services](#).
- Use [drug checking services](#).
- **Call 911** in the event of an overdose (the *Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act* provides immunity from prosecution for simple possession to overdose witnesses who have called 911).

3. Provide information and support, as needed, to help people obtain free naloxone from pharmacies and community organizations listed in the [INSPQ directory](#).

We urge you to be vigilant and to inform us of any unusual situation by using the [fiche de signalement de surdose](#).

For more information:

[Surdose | Direction régionale de santé publique de Montréal \(santepubliquemontreal.ca\)](#)

Source: Direction régionale de santé publique du Montréal – CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal 514-528-2400
