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## Increase in deaths possibly linked to crack use in Montréal

Since March 27, 2022, the Direction régionale de santé publique du CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (DRSP de Montréal) has received reports of 6 deaths due to suspected drug poisoning related to presumed crack use. At this time, these deaths are under investigation. Cocaine and fentanyl were detected in the blood and urine of one individual, whose death seems to have been caused by inhaling crack. A link with the product has yet to be confirmed.

In light of this situation, the crack that is currently available may be contaminated with fentanyl. Fentanyl is a powerful opioid associated with high risks of death, especially for crack users who could be unknowingly exposed to fentanyl. Naloxone could be needed to reverse overdose effects. In case of overdose, call 911 right away for rapid, effective intervention. Hospitalization may be required for naloxone administration under medical supervision or for airway management.

We urge you to be vigilant and to inform us of any situation suggesting possible fentanyl contamination of crack, using the [Overdose Reporting Form](#).

[https://santemontreal.qc.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/professionnels/DRSP/sujets-a-z/Surdoses/Alertes-outils/Fiche\\_Signalement\\_Surdose\\_vfinale\\_septembre2021.pdf](https://santemontreal.qc.ca/fileadmin/fichiers/professionnels/DRSP/sujets-a-z/Surdoses/Alertes-outils/Fiche_Signalement_Surdose_vfinale_septembre2021.pdf)

The DRSP also urges crack users to be careful, regardless of their consumption method (injection, inhalation or other). Public health also encourages clinicians and care providers to enhance interventions to prevent deaths in this population:

1. Share information about the risks of severe overdose and death related to crack use.
2. Offer counselling for lower-risk drug use practices:
  - For people who inject, use supervised consumption services regularly. <https://santemontreal.qc.ca/en/public/support-and-services/supervised-injection-services/>.
  - Avoid using alone.
  - When using with other people, don't all use at the same time.
  - If possible, use fentanyl test strips.
  - Have naloxone close at hand in large enough quantities and know how to use it if someone shows signs of overdose.
  - Call 911 if anyone overdoses (the *Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act* provides immunity from simple possession charges for those who call 911 in the case of an overdose).
3. Inform and, if needed, accompany users so they can obtain naloxone for free in community pharmacies and organizations listed in the INSPQ directory. Montréal community organizations listed in the directory distribute fentanyl test strips at no cost. <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/cartes/naloxone/index.html>

For more information:

<https://santemontreal.qc.ca/en/professionnels/drsp/sujets-de-a-a-z/surdoses/prevention-des-surdoses-liees-aux-drogues/>

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

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