



# Guide to Safer Drug Use

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This package was created by Healthy U: Peer Health & Wellness at the University of Manitoba. We are a group of trained, non-judgmental, and confidential student health and wellness leaders on campus.

We provide outreach activities, workshops, and one-on-one support for our fellow students on a variety of health and well-being topics. Feel free to drop in to chat or pick up more information packages.

If you would like to request or attend one of our workshops or events, check out our website for details.



# Drugs and Your Body

People use drugs for all types of reasons. All substance use comes with risks, meaning there is **no drug that is 100% safe**. If you choose to use, learning more about the substance you're taking and how it interacts in your body can reduce the risk of harm.

## Uppers

Stimulants (uppers) are drugs that **speed up your body**. Your heart rate and breathing gets faster, while making you feel energetic and more alert. Some examples of uppers are Cocaine, Crystal Meth, and ecstasy (MDMA)

## Downers

Depressants (downers) do the opposite of uppers and **slow down your body**. If you have taken downers, you may feel like your mental and physical alertness is slower and your body is more relaxed than normal. Some examples of downers are Heroin, Gamma-Hydroxy-Butyrate (GHB) and Morphine.

## Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens (psychedelics) can **change** the way you **hear**, **smell**, **taste**, **see** and **feel** things, while also changing your **mood** and the way you **think**. Some examples of psychedelics are Mushrooms, LSD and Ketamine.



# What are the risks?

Substance use is only risk-free if you don't use at all. If you choose to use, it's also important to **recognize who you are as a person**. Your size, mood, and gender all matter and can affect how you react to the drug.

## Mental Health

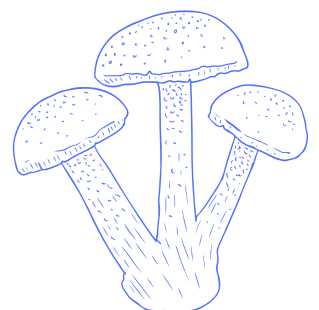
People who have been diagnosed with a mental illness are at higher risk for addiction. Also, people who use drugs are at a higher risk for receiving a mental illness diagnosis. Substance use can work both ways.

## Relationships

If a family member or friend does not agree with your choice to use, then this could place a strain on your relationship. Being able to recognize when your drug use is placing harm on others is important.

## Physical Health

Depending on how often you use, your body can create a tolerance. When a tolerance is created, you'll need higher doses to get the effect you want. Tolerance can easily turn into a dependence where your body needs the drug to function normally.



# Safer Drug Use

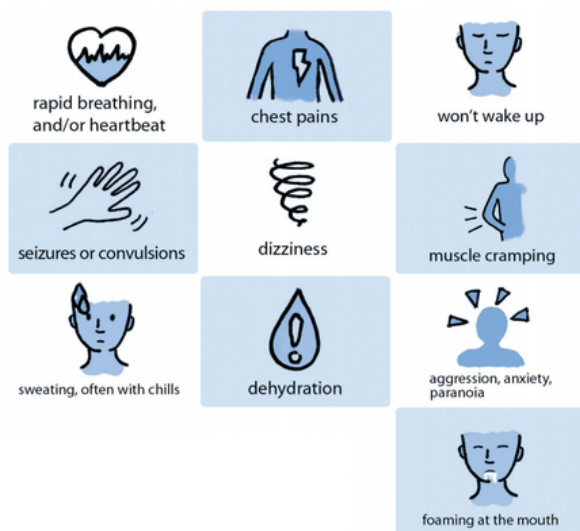
How can you use drugs in a safer way if you choose to use? Here are some helpful tips for safer drug use:

- **Avoid mixing.** Mixing uppers can cause you to overheat and can be hard on your heart. Mixing downers can increase your risk of fainting.
- **Start low and go slow.** If this is your first time using, taking small doses and taking breaks in between can allow you to recognize how your body is reacting.
- **Never use alone or in isolation.** Having people around to check up on you and call emergency services in the case of an overdose can keep you and others around you safer.
- **Test your drugs.** If you have access to a testing kit, or know an organization that does drug testing, it would be good to check the purity of the drug you're choosing to take.
- **Use clean supplies.** Using sterile supplies for drug use is important to reduce your risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infections (STI's).
- **Drink water.** It's easy to get dehydrated if you use drugs, so try do drink water before and after you use to avoid dehydration. Avoid alcohol or caffeinated drinks as they can dehydrate you even more.

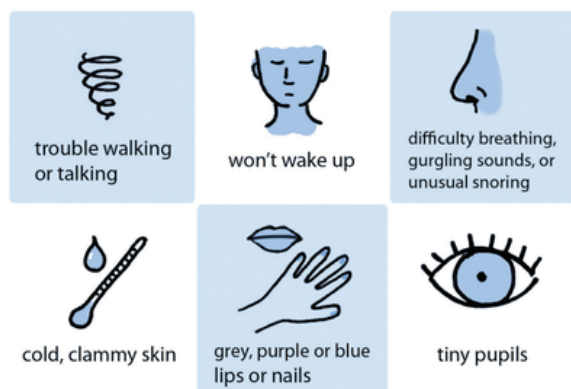


# Recognizing Overdose

## Overdose on Uppers



## Overdose on Downers



Be sure to **call 911** right away if the person is not waking up or they are not breathing! Stay with the person who used to make sure they're okay while you wait for emergency services.

# Naloxone

## What is Naloxone?

Naloxone is a medication that reverses the effects of **opioid related overdose** and prevents death.

## Can I access Naloxone?

Yes! University of Manitoba community members have access to the free **Take Home Naloxone program** run by Health and Wellness. For more information, contact Britt Harvey at (204)295-9032 or [britt.harvey@umanitoba.ca](mailto:britt.harvey@umanitoba.ca)

If you know someone who is not a University of Manitoba community member, but would benefit from having a Naloxone kit at home, contact Street Connections at (204)981-0742 or access [www.streetconnections.ca](http://www.streetconnections.ca) to find the nearest supplier.



# Resources

## Student Counselling Centre\*

474 University Centre, Monday to Friday, 8:30 - 4:30.  
(204)474-8592

The Student Counselling Centre also provides an addictions counsellor for those who are desiring to quit problematic drug use.

<http://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/counselling-resources-students>

## Health and Wellness\*

Health and Wellness Office, Monday to Friday, 8:30 - 4:30.

Britt Harvey - Health and Wellness Educator

<http://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

(204)295-9032 or [britt.harvey@umanitoba.ca](mailto:britt.harvey@umanitoba.ca)

## Street Connections

496 Hargrave Street, Monday to Friday, 8:30 - 4:30

Offers safer drug use supplies, safer sex supplies, home visits, nursing services and counselling and referrals.

(204)981-0742 and/or [www.streetconnections.ca](http://www.streetconnections.ca)

## Online Harm Reduction Resources

[www.torontovibe.com](http://www.torontovibe.com) - provides harm reduction tips for a safer night out.

[www.tripproject.ca](http://www.tripproject.ca) - provides safer sex and drug use tips.

\*There are no in-person services at the University of Manitoba currently.  
Check the relevant websites for remote services and updates.