

COVID-19 Guidance for People Who Use Drugs

COVID-19 continues to spread in our communities, and there are risks any time you gather with others outside your home, especially if you are not fully vaccinated. We must all continue to take steps to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Prevent COVID-19

- **Get vaccinated.** The best way for you to protect yourself and those around you from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. To find out where you can get vaccinated, visit vaccinefinder.nyc.gov or call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692).
- **Stay home if you are sick or were recently exposed to COVID-19.** Monitor your health for COVID-19-related symptoms. If you have mild to moderate symptoms, stay home. Do not leave home, except to get essential medical care (including testing for COVID-19) or basic needs, such as groceries, if someone cannot get them for you.
- **Wear a face mask.** Masks are required for everyone (regardless of vaccination status) in public transit, health care settings, homeless shelters and other settings. If you are not vaccinated, you must wear a face mask in all public settings, indoors and outdoors. If you are vaccinated, you are urged to wear a face mask in all public indoor settings or any setting where you do not know the vaccination status of those around you.
- **Practice healthy hand hygiene.** Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
 - For people who use drugs, these items may not be easy to access. Check with syringe service providers (SSPs), medical clinics or drop-in centers for supplies.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.
 - Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Do not shake hands with others. Instead, wave.
- **Keep physical distance from others.** Stay at least 6 feet away from others any time you are outside your home.

Tips For Safer Drug Use

- Prepare your drugs yourself.
- Avoid using alone. If you are not fully vaccinated, maintain physical distance from people you are with.
- Carry naloxone. Naloxone is a safe medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.
- Create an overdose safety plan with someone who knows you are going to use.
- If you are going to use alone, call the “Never Use Alone” hotline at 800-484-3731 before using.
- Contact a syringe service program (SSP) to see if their services have changed, including hours of operation.

- Be aware that fentanyl is in the drug supply and increases risk of overdose. It is present in nearly all heroin. Fentanyl has also been found in cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, ketamine and pills from nonmedical sources.

If you inject:

- Avoid sharing.
 - If you have to share or reuse syringes (and other equipment), rinse thoroughly with clean water between uses.
 - If using bleach, leave in the barrel for at least 30 seconds. Rinse barrel thoroughly by flushing several times with clean water after bleaching.
- If possible, prepare and administer your own injection.
- Do not lick the needle.

If you use pipes, bongs, straws or e-cigarettes:

- Avoid sharing. Wipe down the parts that you touch with your lips, nose or hands with an alcohol swab between uses.

Medication for Opioid Use Disorder

If you are on medication for opioid use disorder, such as methadone or buprenorphine:

- Contact your opioid treatment provider to discuss your options for telemedicine appointments.
- Talk to your opioid treatment provider about your options for take-home medication.

Resources

- SSPs are programs that provide services and sterile drug equipment to people who use drugs. Call your local SSPs to find out what services are being provided during the COVID-19 pandemic. Visit nyc.gov/health and search for **syringe service programs**.
- To find naloxone near you, visit nyc.gov/nycwell or call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355). Contact community-based programs and pharmacies about naloxone availability before visiting their locations, as hours and availability may have changed.
- NYC Well: NYC Well staff are available 24/7 and can provide free brief counseling and referrals to care in over 200 languages. For support, call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173 or chat online by visiting nyc.gov/nycwell.
- New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) provides education on alcohol and other substance use for individuals and families. You can use their treatment locator tool (available at webapps.oasas.ny.gov/providerDirectory/) to find treatment options in your area.
- For additional resources that address issues such as financial help, food, health care or insurance coverage, and more, visit on.nyc.gov/resource-guide.
- For general information on COVID-19, visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus. For real-time updates, text "COVID" to 692-692. Message and data rates may apply.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

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