

Overdose Prevention & Harm Reduction



Made by the ADVANCE Study



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority



BC MENTAL HEALTH
& SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES
Provincial Health Services Authority



This booklet was created through the “**Addressing COVID-19 Vaccine concerns Among people who are incarcerated**” (**ADVANCE**) Study.

The ADVANCE Study team co-developed educational resources (including this one) with and for PWAI. We asked **People Who Are Incarcerated (PWAI** for short) in BC provincial correctional centres what their concerns about COVID-19 vaccines are, what it’s been like being incarcerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, and how they like to get information about things like COVID-19 and vaccines.

We want PWAI in provincial correctional centres in BC to have access to the information that they need to make informed decisions about COVID-19, and to stay as safe and healthy as possible while incarcerated. We hope this helps you think about what would work best for you and to make informed choices about your health and wellness.

Check out our other resources, listed below. You can ask for a copy from a Programs Officer or from Healthcare Staff:

- Making Informed Choices: A COVID-19 Activity and Info Book
- Making Informed Choices About COVID-19 Vaccines
- Wellness While in Custody
- What You Need to Know About COVID-19 Testing
- Planning for Release
- Overdose Prevention & Harm Reduction
- COVID-19 FAQ Posters
- COVID-19 Myth Busting Posters
- Real Talk Comic
- Needle Hate Comic
- Making Informed Choices: A COVID-19 Activity and Info Book (Reference Edition)

Overdose Prevention

As you are probably aware, there's an ongoing overdose crisis in BC. The supply of opioids and some other drugs in BC continues to be unpredictable with new ingredients showing up regularly in the drugs that are purchased in the criminalised drug market (for example, fentanyl and opioid analogues, and benzodiazepines). It's hard to know what you're getting within the criminalised drug market.

Because of the poisoned unregulated drug supply in BC, more people have died from overdoses than from COVID-19 in this province. In 2022, men aged 40-59 years old were the most likely to die from overdoses in BC, followed by 19-39 year old men.

To try to stop this trend, the BC Government recently announced that they're going to remove criminal penalties for possession of certain substances for personal use. Adults 18 years and older will be able to possess up to a cumulative total of 2.5 grams of opioids (e.g. heroin and fentanyl), cocaine (powder or crack), methamphetamines (meth), or MDMA (ecstasy). This will be in effect from January 31, 2023 to January 31, 2026, throughout BC. It will still be illegal to sell or traffic drugs of any weight once decriminalisation goes into effect.

The BC Government has also begun creating a system for people who use drugs to access prescribed medications to replace the toxic unregulated drugs. This is known as 'Safer Supply Prescribing', and it has been available in BC since March 2020. Right now there are four federally funded 'SAFER' programs operating in BC (three in Vancouver and one in Victoria), however limited numbers of people are able to enrol in the programs, so you may have difficulty accessing these. Doctors and some nurses in BC are allowed to prescribe medications to replace the

toxic unregulated drugs, so you may still be able to access 'Safer Supply Prescribing' through other clinics.

People recently released from custody in BC are at way higher risk of overdose death than people who have not been recently released from custody.

Drug tolerance decreases during periods of abstinence. Amounts of substances that you were able to tolerate before can be fatal, and the drug supply has likely changed while you were in custody.

Sobriety can be hard to keep up. The transition from corrections to community can be very stressful and it's common for people to use substances. Even if you are planning to continue to try to maintain sobriety after you leave custody, it's important you are aware of how to reduce the risk of having an overdose. It might be important for you, or for a friend to know.

To lower your risk of overdose, consider the following safer drug use tips:



Start low, go slow.

Your tolerance has changed and the supply might have, too! Test a small amount first, then increase slowly.



Use with others.

Have a buddy or go to a supervised consumption site.

If you have to use alone, get someone to look in on you and call for help if needed.



Keep a Naloxone kit nearby.

Not just for you, but for others.

Correctional Health Services have 'Take Home Naloxone' kits at all correctional centres. If you want to make sure you will have one placed in your effects, complete a paper or electronic health service request from your living unit.



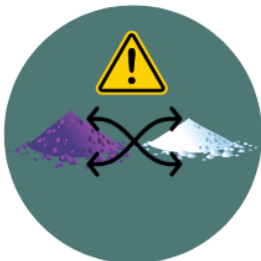
Download some apps.

If you are using drugs alone, you can use the **LifeGuard App** to set up a timer that if it goes off and calls 911 if you don't respond. **The Brave App** provides access to a community of people willing to provide remote supervision at the very moment they are most at risk of overdose.



Check in with your body.

If you are sick and/or tired, it can increase your risk of overdose.



Use caution when mixing.

Using more than one drug at once increases risk of overdose. Use less than you normally would and go slowly.



Get your drugs checked.

There are multiple sites in BC where you can get your drugs checked confidentially, for free. Drug checking can give you info about what's in your drugs and how much, to inform use or explain your experience. See the resource section for sites.

Opioid Agonist Therapy and Safer Supply

Another option is to access a medically regulated supply, such as Safer Supply or OAT (Opioid Agonist Therapy).

Want to get on it...	Are already on it...
<p>Check out the Resource List on the next pages in this booklet for community clinics that offer OAT support.</p> <p>Consider talking to Correctional Health Services about starting OAT while you're incarcerated. You can continue your prescription at a community pharmacy upon release.</p>	<p>If you know you're being released:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visit Correctional Health Services to get your prescription sent to the pharmacy of your choosing. <p>If you're released unexpectedly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go your to nearest pharmacy and tell the pharmacist which Correctional Centre to contact for your prescription. <p>Either way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Book an appointment with a doctor ASAP after release to renew your prescription. Your prescription from Corrections will only last 7-14 days.

Correctional Health Services provides mental health care, substance use treatment, dentistry, and more for people while they are in custody in a BC Provincial Correctional Centre. Submit a health services request anytime if you would like to access healthcare services. Common services include:

- Screening for Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections, including hepatitis C virus, HIV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis. You can be tested for just one, or any combination- your choice.
- Treatment for Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections, such as Hepatitis C, HIV, and other STIs.
- Opioid Agonist Treatment that can be continued after release back to the community.
- Support for chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, COPD, etc.

Did you know?

Hepatitis C (a virus that impacts the liver) can be cured by taking 1 - 3 tablets per day for 8 - 12 weeks! New treatments called 'Direct Acting Antivirals' cure over 95% of people, with very few side effects!



Correctional Health Services
can help you start treatment while in custody.

Resources and Services to Support People Who Use Substances

There are many organisations across BC that exist to support people who use substances, either while they are using substances, or if they want to try and reduce or stop using substances.

We know it can be hard to find these services though, so we have created a list here of the major resources and services that are province-wide or near Correctional Centres in BC. They are organised based on whether they provide overdose prevention services, which are for people actively using substances, or if they provide drug treatment or recovery services, which are for people who would like to reduce or stop using substances.

There's a lot of services out there, so we couldn't provide detailed info for every resource that exists. Think of this as a place for you to begin finding out what services are out there to support you.

Many of the resources have multiple locations. For resources and services near the Correctional Centre you are currently in, ask your Programs Officer or submit a health services request to speak to Correctional Health Services.

Overdose Prevention



Toward The Heart *Overdose Prevention/Harm Reduction*

Phone: 1-800-663-1441

Harm reduction sites: <https://towardtheheart.com/site-finder>

Naloxone lesson: <https://towardtheheart.com/naloxone-lesson/>

Go to the websites above to find harm reduction supply distribution sites; take home naloxone sites; naloxone training, supervised consumption services; peer support programs; and much more.



BCCSU Drug Checking *Drug Checking/Harm Reduction*

<http://www.vch.ca/public-health/harm-reduction/overdose-prevention-response/drug-checking>

In collaboration with community partners, free, anonymous drug-checking services are available in Vancouver and across Vancouver Coastal Health, including at multiple overdose prevention sites (e.g. Insite & the Molson Overdose Prevention Site).



Get Your Drugs Tested *Drug Checking/ Harm Reduction*

Phone: 778-819-0922

880 Hastings St E, Vancouver, BC V6A 1R6

<https://getyourdrugstested.com/>

A free community service in Vancouver that offers drug testing in person or by mail-in, safely and anonymously. They test opioids, psychedelics, pharmaceuticals, stimulants and more in about 15 minutes as well as have safer drug use supplies available to pick-up.



Interior Health Drug Checking Services *Drug Checking/ Harm Reduction*

Visit: <https://drugchecking.ca/#locations> for a map and complete list of all locations and hours.

Free and confidential drug checking service, using mobile testing and multiple permanent locations in BC's interior.



Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project *Drug Checking/ Harm Reduction*

Phone: 250-415-7637

Visit: <https://substance.uvic.ca/> for a list of sites and their hours.

A team of chemists, social workers, computer scientists, pharmacists, and people who use drugs, partnering to provide and evaluate drug checking services on Vancouver Island. Free and confidential drug checking services are available in-person at multiple sites across the island or by mail. Results are given within 15-20 minutes.

Substance Use Treatment & Recovery Services



BCCSU Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) Clinic Map *OAT Clinics in BC*

<https://www.bccsu.ca/oat-clinics-accepting-new-patients/>

The BC Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) manages a list of all the Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) Clinics in BC that are accepting new patients, which is available online at the above address. The list includes the location of each clinic and contact information for it.

BCCSU Addiction Treatment List *Bed-Based Addiction Treatment and Supportive Recovery Services*

https://www.bccsu.ca/recovery_services_in_bc/

The BC Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU) manages lists of all the Licensed Addiction Treatment and Recovery Services and all the Registered Supportive Recovery Assisted Living Services in BC, which are available online at the above address. The lists includes the location of the service and contact information for it.



Alcohol & Drug Information Referral Service *Referral service*
Free call, 24/7: 1-800-663-1441 (multilingual service available)

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/mental-health-substance-use/resources/alcohol-drug-information-referral-service>

Provides free, confidential information and referral services to people in BC in need of support with any kind of substance use issue (alcohol or other drugs). Referral to community substance use treatment services is available for all ages. Information available includes prevention resources, support groups, and addiction related topics such as fetal alcohol syndrome.



Carrier Sekani Family Services *Residential addiction treatment/ recovery program*

Phone: 1-866-567-2333 <https://www.csfs.org/>

PO Box 1219, Vanderhoof, BC V0G 3A0

An integrated Health and Wellness residential Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Program offered to Indigenous people.

Note: First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



Gya'Wa'Tlaab Healing Centre *Residential addiction treatment/ recovery program*

Phone: 250-639-9817 <http://gyawatlaab.ca/>

PO Box 1018, Haisla, BC V0T 2B0

This is an Early Recovery/Stabilization (first two years of the journey toward recovery from addiction) program for Indigenous people (male, 18+ only). **NOTE:** First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



'NAMGIS
FIRST NATION

NAMGIS Treatment Centre *Residential addiction treatment/
recovery program*

During work hours: 250-974-5522 ext. 2131

After hours/weekend support: 250-974-8015

PO Box 290, Alert Bay, BC V0N 1A0

Alcohol and drug treatment program based on a foundation of culture and traditions, and respect for individual choices and responsibilities. **NOTE:** First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



Nenqayni Wellness Centre *Residential addiction treatment/
recovery program*

Phone: 250-989-0301 <http://nenqayni.com/>

PO Box 2529, Williams Lake, BC V2G 4P2

An accredited program that provides holistic healing to First Nations and Inuit youth, families, and communities in a safe and secure environment. All referrals to Nenqayni Wellness Centre's programs must be done through a worker. **NOTE:** First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



North Wind Wellness Centre *Residential addiction treatment/ recovery program*

Phone: 250-843-6977 <https://northwindwellnesscentre.ca/>

PO Box 2480 Station A, Dawson Creek, BC V1G 4T9

The treatment program offers culturally appropriate care to people living with addictions. **NOTE:** First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



ROUND LAKE
ALCOHOL AND DRUG
TREATMENT SOCIETY

Round Lake Alcohol and Drug Treatment Society *Residential addiction treatment/ recovery program*

Phone: 1-888-554-9944 <https://roundlaketreatmentcentre.ca/>

200 Emery Louis Road, Armstrong, BC V0E 1B5

First Nations' addiction recovery and trauma program offering a 6 - 7 week long Alcohol and Drug addiction rehabilitation program. **NOTE:** First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



Sts'ailes

Sts'ailes Community Wellness *Residential addiction treatment/recovery program*

Phone: 604-997-2849 <https://www.stsailes.com/telmexawtexw>

Salish Way, Agassiz, BC V0M 1A1

Drug and Alcohol Addiction treatment program developed in collaboration with First Nation Health Authority, the Children – Youth Mental Health Substance Use collaborative and Fraser – Salish First Nations communities to support people to heal traumas. **NOTE:** First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



Tsow-Tun Le Lum Society *Residential addiction treatment/recovery program*

Phone: 250-390-3123 <http://www.tsowtunlelum.org/>

699 Capilano Rd, Lantzville BC V0R 2H0

A 40-day intensive residential program for Indigenous people to discover their own unique pathway for continuing recovery from the effects of alcohol and drug abuse. **NOTE:** First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



Wilp Si'Satxw Community Healing Centre *Residential addiction treatment/ recovery program*

Phone: 1-250-849-5211 <https://www.wilpchc.ca/>

Box 429 Cedarvale Kitwanga Road, Kitwanga, BC V0J 2A0

Provides holistic, spiritually-based processes to start people on their healing journey. **NOTE:** First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



Esk'etemc Recovery House *Residential addiction treatment/ recovery program*

Phone: 250-440-5651 ext. #261 <https://www.esketemc.ca/>

Letwilc Ren Semec Centre, 949 Cougar Trail, Alkali Lake, BC V0L 1B0

Provides safe housing and programs to strengthen wellness, recovery and reintegration into the community. **NOTE:** First Nations clients are completely subsidised by FNHA at this centre.



Addiction Recovery Program (ARP) *Residential addiction treatment/ recovery program*

Phone: 1-866-658-1221

http://www.vch.ca/Locations-Services/result?res_id=1188

Free service for residents in VCH providing stable, short-term housing to individuals participating in a substance use recovery program. For 18 months, program coordinators help you set goals, build skills and feel supported while you stay in safe, affordable housing. If you have been free of drugs and alcohol for three months, you could be eligible to apply.



Rapid Access Addiction Clinic (RAAC) *Outpatient substance use disorder treatment*

Phone: 604-806-8867 ext. 3

<http://www.providencehealthcare.org/rapid-access-addiction-clinic-raac>

St. Paul's Hospital, Room 2C-210, 2nd floor, Burrard Building

The RAAC accepts patient self-referrals, and services are free. RAAC treats patients for the following substance use disorders: Opioid Use Disorder, Alcohol Use Disorder / alcoholism, Benzodiazepine (benzo) dependency, Nicotine addiction/reliance, Stimulant addiction/reliance.



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Virtual Doctor of the Day, First Nations Health Authority

Phone: 1-855-344-3800

www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/ehealth/virtual-doctor-of-the-day/how-it-works

All First Nations people who live in BC are eligible for this service free of charge. To access medical assistance for substance use, call to book an appointment with the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day.



ISBN

978-1-7781841-4-7



2022 **ADVANCE Study Team**. Attributions mandatory for originals and adaptations. <https://stbbipathways.ca/covid-19/>