

JULY-AUGUST 2023

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS



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Overdose awareness

Dear partners,

We are dedicating this edition of our newsletter to overdose awareness to mark International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31. In it, you'll find an overview of the situation in the CIUSSS West-Central-Montreal's territory, as well as in other areas of Montreal, along with a portrait of our services and those of our partners.

Overdose-related deaths are avoidable, and every action counts to prevent them.

Happy reading!

The Editorial Team

Centre intégré
universitaire de santé
et de services sociaux
du Centre-Ouest-
de-l'Île-de-Montréal

Québec 



LA SANTÉ PUBLIQUE POUR TOUS
PUBLIC HEALTH FOR ALL

STATUS OF THE CIUSSS WEST-CENTRAL MONTREAL AND MONTREAL TERRITORY

For some time now, the opioid overdose crisis has been a hot topic in the media. Several indicators point to an increase in overdoses on the Island of Montreal:

- the number of emergency or overdose interventions carried out in supervised consumption services (SCS).
- the number of Urgence-Santé interventions for intoxication by the administration of naloxone.
- the distribution and use of naloxone by the general public.

"People who use drugs (PUDs) are therefore unknowingly exposed to mixtures of concern."

Without these interventions, the death toll from opioid and other drug intoxication would be much higher.

Since 2020, the Direction régionale de santé publique has issued several overdose alerts or calls for vigilance concerning the presence of new substances in street drugs.

- the presence of fentanyl in substances sold as heroin, cocaine or crack.
- the presence of other synthetic opioids, such as isotonitazene, etonitazene, metonitazene and carfentanil, with similar or greater potency than fentanyl.
- the presence of xylazine, a non-opioid substance used as an animal sedative and muscle relaxant.

- the presence of etizolam and other benzodiazepine analogues not marketed in Canada, acting notably as anxiolytics and sedatives.

People who use drugs (PUDs) are therefore unknowingly exposed to mixtures of concern.

This is also corroborated by the supra-regional project carried out by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec to analyze substances found in the urine of people who use drugs in Quebec.

The data collected between September 1 and October 17, 2021 in 7 regions of Quebec, from 660 participants, shows that the main substances reported consumed (in the last 3 days) are not necessarily the same as those detected in the person's urine.

Data on suspected intoxication deaths reported by the Bureau du coronier du Québec, from January 1, 2022 to July 17, 2023, indicate that, for the Montreal region, out of a total of 245 deaths, more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the victims were male, around half were aged between 40 and 59, and around $\frac{3}{4}$ died at home.

As for the CIUSSS West-Central Montreal population, of these deaths, 24 occurred in the (LSN) de la Montagne territory (Côte-des-Neiges-Métro-Parc-Extension) and 18 in the (LSN) Cavendish territory (Côte-Saint-Luc-NDG-Montréal-Ouest).

Extremely hot weather and varying user tolerance (for example, fentanyl exposure in occasional users or stimulant users) could also increase vulnerability to overdose. In July 2023,

the DRSP received a record number of reports of non-fatal overdoses.

On a positive note, services and community redistribution of naloxone increased between 2021 and 2022, enabling citizens to intervene in the event of overdose.

For the De la Montagne and Cavendish LSNs, the number has risen from 538 to 925, and from 188 to 320 respectively, with the vast majority of services provided by community pharmacies.

The "harm reduction" approach, i.e. an approach based on reducing the negative consequences of drug use rather than eliminating the drug-using behavior itself, is put forward. From this perspective, it is essential to be familiar with the services available to drug users, and to accompany and refer them. Making services accessible and non-stigmatizing can have a significant impact on overdose prevention.

*For the Montreal region,
out of a total of 245 deaths,*

- *more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the victims were male,*
- *around half were aged between 40 and 59,*
- *and around $\frac{3}{4}$ died at home.*

(Décès par intoxication suspectée,
Bureau du coroner du Québec,
from January 1, 2022 to July 17, 2023)

Web links

- [Overdose Watch \(French\)](#)
- [Subscribe to Overdose Alerts](#)
- [Previous alerts and calls for vigilance \(French and English\)](#)



RECOGNIZING OPIOID OVERDOSES

Source : Canadian government
"Opioid overdose"

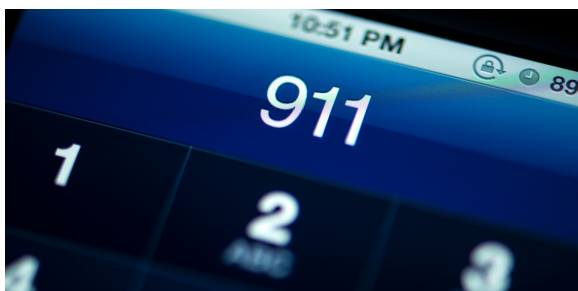
Signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose

- Difficulty, walking, talking, staying awake
- Blue or grey lips or nails
- Very small pupils
- Cold and clammy skin
- Dizziness and confusion
- Extreme drowsiness
- Choking, gurgling or snoring sounds
- Slow, weak or no breathing
- Inability to wake up, even when shaken or shouted at

What to do in the event of an overdose

- Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Administer naloxone if available.

An overdose is always an emergency. Even if someone has taken naloxone, it can wear off before the person has completely recovered from their overdose. They may need more than one dose. Always call for help.



Infography : Know how to recognize an opioid overdose

Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act

Did you know? The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act protects you against charges of simple drug possession. It offers legal protection to people who overdose or witness an overdose and seek help.

**Video : Good Samaritan law
"Call, stay and help"**

NALOXONE

By Julie Bernier, BScN, MPH
Clinical Activities Specialist, Public Health Team
Frontline Integrated Services Directorate

What is naloxone?

Naloxone is a drug used as an antidote to opioid overdoses. It binds to the same receptors in the brain as opioids, without producing their effects. It temporarily reverses the effects of an overdose.

Naloxone can be administered in two forms:

- Intranasally
- Intramuscular

When to administer naloxone

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

- Has difficulty breathing, snoring or does not breathe at all.
- Reacts little or not at all to noise and pain.
- The person may also have bluish lips and fingernails (cyanosis) and contracted pupils (miosis).

HOW TO ADMINISTER NALOXONE

(Click the links)

By injection

- [Video](#)
- [Infographic](#)

Nasally

- [Video](#)
- [Infographic](#)



Where to get naloxone, free of charge

- [Map search](#)
- [Search by postal code](#)

Available training sessions

- [L'administration de la naloxone pour inverser les effets d'une surdose d'opioïdes \(ENA\) \(French\)](#)
- It's also a good idea to take first-aid training that includes cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and to make sure your certification is up to date.

Tips

- Naloxone has no effect on non-opioid substances. It doesn't produce any kind of high, therefore there is no risk of dependence.
- Storage: keep naloxone away from light, at room temperature, and check expiration dates, etc.



Reduced-risk consumption practices

- Regularly attend supervised consumption services.
- Avoid using alone.
- Avoid using at the same time when consuming in a group.
- Use drug-testing services.
- Reduce drug dosage to test its effects.
- Have naloxone available in sufficient quantities and know how to use it (if in doubt, don't hesitate to use it - it's safe even when not needed).
- Use fentanyl and fentanyl analog test strips, as appropriate.
- Call 911 in the event of an overdose (the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act provides immunity from prosecution for simple possession to witnesses of an overdose who call 911).

Recommendations for clinicians and caregivers

- Offer counseling on reduced-risk consumption practices.
- Help people obtain free naloxone from pharmacies and community organizations that redistribute naloxone.
- Refer people with opioid use disorders to addiction treatment services.
- Be vigilant and inform the DRSP (Santé Montréal) of any unusual situation using the overdose report form.

Anyone at risk of overdose and those close to them are advised to carry a naloxone kit at all times.

Santé Montréal's website [« Prévention des surdoses liées aux drogues »](#) (in French only)

Source : Direction régionale de santé publique de Montréal

"Overdose prevention is everyone's business! "

INSPQ training on stigma, opioids, polyintoxication and overdoses

Prejudice against people at risk of overdose persists, and is a major barrier to accessing care and services for these people. With a view to combating the stigmatization of people who use psychoactive substances, 'La prévention des surdoses, l'affaire de toutes et de tous!' training has been developed. It is aimed at staff working in the health and social services network and in the community.

For more information, [click here](#) (content in French only)

INJECTION EQUIPMENT ACCESS CENTRES (CAMIs)

Source: Government of Québec, "[Distribution of new injection equipment](#)"

People who inject drugs with used equipment are at greater risk of contracting certain sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs) such as [hepatitis B and C](#) and [HIV](#). Distributing new injection equipment to people who use drugs encourages them to adopt safer practices and reduces the risk of catching or spreading STBBIs.

The distribution of new injection equipment is supported by the World Health Organization (WHO). It does not encourage the use of illicit drugs or criminal activity.

At the CIUSSS West-Central Montreal, CLSC de Benny-Farm and CLSC Métro are CAMIs, offering injection equipment and recovery of used syringes.

Other services

- Access to safer inhalation equipment.
- Access to care and treatment.
- Information and education.
- Listening and support.

The following services are available to the at-risk population through the Integrated Screening and Prevention Services for HIV/AIDS and other STBBIs (ISPV)

- Vaccination against certain STBBIs;
- Screening for STIs;
- Referral to specialized STI and addiction resources.



Eligibility

New injection equipment is available to everyone. People who wish to obtain drug injection equipment do not need to register anywhere, consult someone to get a referral or have a Québec health insurance card.

People younger than 14 must however meet with a healthcare professional to gain access to new injection equipment.

To find an injection equipment access center (CAMI), [click here](#).

Retrieving prickly objects

- [Integrated Used Syringe and Needle Recovery System \(SIRSAU\)](#).
- [Using a sharp object container \(content in French only\)](#).

Safe disposal containers for syringes can be purchased and returned free of charge at the following places:

- Community pharmacies
- At CAMI locations

ADDICTION PREVENTION SERVICE

By Catherine Roberge and Barthélémy Noël Beau,
Chief Program Manager
and Professional Coordinator
Mental Health and Addiction Directorate
CIUSSS West-Central Montreal

Service description

The CIUSSS West-Central's Addiction Prevention Service offers psychosocial services to individuals aged 14 and over seeking support for their use of psychoactive substances (alcohol, drugs, medication), gambling, the Internet and screens. The service's mandate is to provide early intervention to prevent a situation from worsening. The team also offers support to the entourage of any individual experiencing one of the above-mentioned problems.

The Addiction Prevention Service works with the user's objectives, whether to control, reduce or stop consumption or problematic behavior, or to maintain acquired abstinence. The philosophy guiding interventions is the harm reduction model: people are met where they are, and an intervention plan is co-constructed to put forward their power of choice by and for themselves. The team accompanies people with adapted interventions based on recognized approaches in the field of addiction.

Service offer

- Assessment and referral to appropriate services, helping the person to accept referral to specialized services (as needed)
- Maintenance of previously acquired abstinence



- Early intervention to prevent a worsening of the situation, and to reduce or stop gambling consumption or behaviour.
- My Choices programs, aimed at adults (18 and over) who want to control and/or reduce their consumption of alcohol and/or any other substance; or gambling. The programs are Alcochoix, Mes Choix Cannabis, Mes Choix Toutes Substances, Sage Usage and Jeu Me Questionne.
- 'Entourage' follow-up for those close to an individual with an addiction problem
- 'Partners' follow-up with other teams and services, depending on the presence of multiple problems for the user.

How do I get access?

Do you have concerns about your own or a loved one's consumption?

- Contact a psychosocial counsellor by calling Info-social at 811, option 2. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Go to the psychosocial reception desk at a CLSC. To find out more about CIUSSS West-Central psychosocial services, [click here](#).

For further information, please contact the Prevention Department at dependance.ccomtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca.

ADDICTION REHABILITATION CENTERS

**CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, for service in French
and CISSS Montérégie-Ouest, for service in English**

By Catherine Roberge, Chief Program Manager
Mental Health and Addiction Directorate
CIUSSS West-Central Montreal

Targeted issues

The Addiction Rehabilitation Centers (Centre de réadaptation en dépendance, CRD) offers detoxification, rehabilitation and social reintegration services for people with substance abuse or dependency problems, including:

- Alcohol consumption (alcoholism)
- Drug use (cannabis, opioids, etc.)
- Gambling (slot machines, casino, sports betting, lottery tickets)
- Cyberaddiction (Internet, video games, social networks)

The CRD also offers support to the families of these people.

The CRD team can help with:

- Reduce the negative consequences of consumer habits, gambling and Internet use;

- Reduce the negative consequences of consumer habits, gambling and Internet use;
- Adopt responsible behavior in the face of these;
- Acquire new skills to cope with the difficulties of everyday life.

How do I get access?

- For **service in French**: speak to an expert at CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal by calling 514 385-1232 (users can call directly). For more information, [click here](#).
- For **service in English**: speak to an expert from CISSS Montérégie-Ouest by calling 1-866-964-4413 (users may call directly). For more information, [click here](#).
- **Clientele: Young people and adults**

The CRD can support the training of caregivers. For more information, write to: formation.depandances.ccsmtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca



CONNEXION PROGRAM

By Catherine Roberge, Chief Program Manager
and Tiffany Verdon, Professional Coordinator
Mental Health and Addiction Directorate
CIUSSS West-Central Montreal

Service description

The Connexion program is a transitional primary health care service for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The primary objective is to re-connect people to medical or psychosocial services, or to community resources that can provide a sustainable response to their needs or situation.

Clients can be referred by community partners, the Montreal Police Department (SPVM), hospitals and the internal services of CIUSSS West-Central Montreal. Our services are tailored to the needs of our clients.

Whatever the situation of the person experiencing homelessness, the aim is first and foremost to create a therapeutic link with them, in order to better understand the reason for their homelessness. The service works to provide a positive experience with the health and social services network (RSSS), and to find the right service to help the person maintain residential stability.

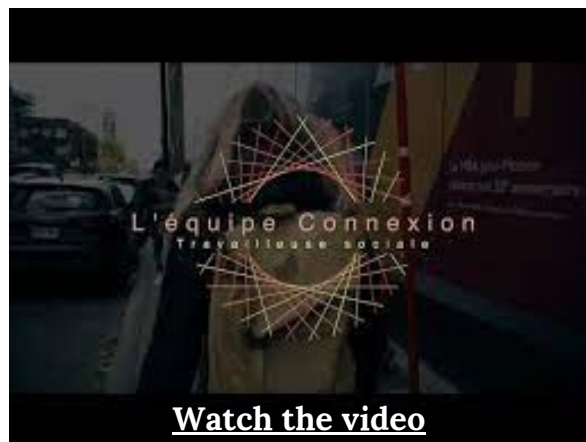
The peer helper (educator)

The Connexion program includes a "Pair aidant" (educator) service whose role is to inspire hope in people living with addiction or homelessness by sharing their own experiences and journey.

The peer helper adapts his or her interventions and approaches to the needs of the people he or she meets, whether for harm reduction or abstinence, to support the goal that the person wishes to achieve. The peer helper contributes to the improvement of CAMI services, makes

Service offer

- Proximity
- Psychosocial follow-up
- Primary health care
- Support and accompaniment in meeting subsistence needs
- Liaison and accompaniment to general RSSS services and community network
- Liaison and accompaniment to specialized RSSS services
- Fostering hope through the experiential exchange of a caregiver



recommendations to the organization and supports individuals.

The peer helper distributes naloxone and consumption equipment as needed. Defending users' rights and ensuring access to services are central to his or her practice.

Within the CIUSSS, he has been a fervent defender of clinicians' right to administer and distribute naloxone.

Substance Abuse Human Relations Agent

The Connexion program also includes the role of a substance abuse human relations agent who works in collaboration with the program's interdisciplinary team, as well as with the peer helper.

Harm reduction, including overdose prevention, is an important part of his practice. He works in collaboration with various specialized services, including the CHUM addiction medicine service and the Relais service of the CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal. He promotes the availability of safe consumption equipment and naloxone within the organization. He is a resource person for certain community partners to help them navigate through the health and social services network and access addiction services.

He keeps community partners constantly informed and helps them access specialized addiction services, including those of CHUM's Department of Addiction Medicine, alternative therapies and therapy centers, as directly as possible.

It constantly shares the latest data and information on addictions, overdoses and new drugs on the market. This collaborative approach between CIUSSS and community partners makes a big difference in this overdose context.

ADDICTION TEAM HERZL CENTER CIUSSS WEST-CENTRAL

Source : [CIUSSS West-Central Website](#)

The substance use disorder clinic at the Herzl Family Practice Centre serves people from all over Montreal and neighbouring regions. The vast majority of our patients suffer from opioid use disorder. We encourage harm reduction as well as agonist treatment such as methadone, suboxone and kadian.

A team dedicated to helping patients who suffer from substance use disorders. We are made up of full time and part time doctors, a nurse, a psychologist as well as a social worker.

No MD consult is needed to access our care. Self referrals are accepted and encouraged.

Telephone: 514- 340-8273

Email: herzl.equipe8.ccomtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Herzl telephone: 514-340-8253



JULY-AUGUST 2023

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Integrated Regional Public Health Action Plan (IRAP-PH) 2023-2025 goes online and promotional campaign is launched

- A [web version](#) of IRAP is now available [at this link](#) (French)

Three of the five **video vignettes** produced to illustrate the five priority public health themes are available at the following links:

- **Child development** (French)
 - [YouTube](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
- **Healthy aging** (French)
 - [Youtube](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
- **Climate-resilient neighbourhoods and residents** (French)
 - [YouTube](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
- Coming soon: Youth mental health and The opioid crisis

To subscribe to Santé Montréal's Instagram page: Santé Montréal (@sante_montreal).



Financial assistance - Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec

Fondation de la Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec funds numerous respite care projects throughout Quebec. To learn more about eligibility criteria, [click HERE](#).



REMINDER - *Feeding my baby while stimulating language* workshop

The CIUSSS Children, Families and Youth Team invites you to an online workshop on *Feeding my baby while stimulating language*. This virtual workshop will enable you to learn more about the introduction of food and how to obtain support for language stimulation. Families welcome.

French workshops: September 14 and November 9, from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

English workshops: October 12 and December 7, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

To register, please leave a message on our voice mailbox at 514-934-0505, ext. 6975.

Poster

REMINDER - Access to the Institut national de santé publique's provincial Digital Learning Environment (Environnement numérique d'apprentissage, ENA)

It is now possible for community organizations and individuals outside the healthcare network to register for the Provincial Digital Learning Environment (Environnement numérique d'apprentissage, ENA) portal via the link below, and gain access to all our online training courses!

<https://sondages.inspq.qc.ca/ena/index.php/921438?lang=fr>



REMINDER - What's on Tuesday farmers' market at the Jewish General Hospital

Until October, every Tuesday afternoon, at the Pavilion K entrance (Légaré Street) of the Jewish General Hospital, a small market of organic fruits and vegetables from La Berceuse Farm and local flowers is held.

CONTACT US

Write to us at
guichetsantepublique.ccomtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca