

Medetomidine is now common in BC's unregulated opioid supply

Medetomidine is a sedative usually found in opioids (down).

If you use unregulated opioids, you might be using medetomidine and not know it. Overdoses in BC are increasing and medetomidine is most likely the cause.

What happens when you take medetomidine

Medetomidine can cause **harmful effects** and **make an overdose worse** by:

- lowering the heart rate
- causing prolonged sedation (not waking up for a long time)
- changing blood pressure

You can get **serious withdrawal symptoms**:

- severe vomiting
- a racing heart rate
- chest pain
- severe headache
- confusion

Use harm reduction practices to reduce risk



Test your drugs



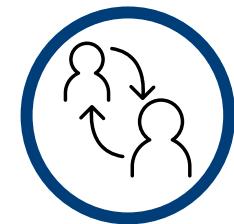
Check drug alerts



Have naloxone and know how to use it



Use with someone you trust



Take turns using so you can help each other



Start low, go slow

- If you want help using less or stopping, help is available. Ask your doctor about opioid agonist therapy and other supports.
- **Call 911 or go to the hospital** if you experience harmful effects or serious withdrawal symptoms.
- Naloxone doesn't work on medetomidine but **still give naloxone for an opioid overdose** - it's safe and helps the person start breathing again.

For more information

- Find out more about medetomidine in the [BCCDC Medetomidine Info Sheet](#)
- Learn how to respond to a drug poisoning by following the [SAVE ME steps](#)
- Healthcare providers: learn how to respond to low heart rate in the [BCCDC Responding to Low Heart Rate](#)
- Find where to [get your drugs tested](#)
- For mental health and substance use supports go to [HelpStartsHere.gov.bc.ca](#)