

Sedation and Extreme Heat

A Guide for Overdose Responders

Sedation and extreme heat can increase your chances for harm

Sedatives are increasingly found in the unregulated drug supply

- Sedatives (e.g., medetomidine, benzos) can cause deep, **prolonged sedation**
- People may remain unconscious or unable to move for long periods of time in direct sun or on hot surfaces
- This can greatly increase the risk of burns, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke

The highest risk to people using sedating substances in the heat is overdose with slowed or stopped breathing

- Call 911, follow the **SAVEME steps**, and give rescue breaths and naloxone
- Naloxone should always be given in cases of suspected opioid overdose
- A person may remain unresponsive after naloxone is given if sedatives are present

Next, focus on protecting people from extreme heat

- Move the person into a shaded, cool and/or ventilated or air-conditioned space
- Remove or loosen extra or restrictive clothing
- Apply cool, wet cloths or ice packs to the neck and/or armpits
- Continue to monitor breathing and give rescue breaths as required

Heat exhaustion may make someone: dizzy, thirsty, very sweaty, nauseous, weak

Heat stroke may make someone: drowsy, confused, unconscious
Do not assume their sedation is caused by substance use



Heat stroke is a medical emergency!
Call 9-1-1 or seek medical attention!

Ongoing monitoring is essential
Give rescue breaths until help arrives