

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. As the city reopens, we must continue to take steps to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Prevent COVID-19

Keep in mind these core four tips to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19:

- **Stay home if you do not feel well or are [at higher risk of COVID-19 complications](#).**
 - Follow updates on planned reopening.
 - Until there is a vaccine, staying home as often as possible (if your job allows) is still the safest option to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.
 - Monitor your health more closely than usual 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 to get basic needs such as groceries, if someone can't get them for you.
- **Wear a face covering.** Even if you feel well and have no symptoms, wear a [face covering](#) when you are outside your home and to stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- **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.
 - If you do not have a stable place to live, try to stay at least 6 feet away from other people and wear a face covering.

Tips for Safer Drug Use

- Wipe down drug packaging, supplies and surfaces before use with disinfecting products, diluted bleach, or products with at least 60% alcohol.
- Prepare your drugs yourself.
- Avoid using alone but maintain physical distance with people you are with.
- Try to limit the number of people you interact with. For anyone you do not live with, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet.
- 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 an [SSP](#) to see if they are delivering sterile drug use supplies and naloxone.
- Be prepared for potential shortages or changes in the drug supply.

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 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.

Additional Guidance

- If you take any medications, talk to your health care provider about getting extra medication to reduce trips to the pharmacy.
- 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.
- For additional resources that address issues such as financial help, food, health care or insurance coverage, and more, see the [Comprehensive Resource Guide](#). Visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus and look for **Community Services**.
- 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. 7.7.20