COVID-19: Guidance for People Who Use Drugs

For general information on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus or cdc.gov/covid19. For real-time updates, text “COVID” to 692-692. Message and data rates may apply.

Prevent COVID-19

- Stay home. Even if you feel well and have no symptoms, you must stay home as much as you can.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- 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. Instead, wave.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, or other cold or flu-like symptoms.
- Create more personal space between yourself and others, including by keeping at least 6 feet from others. This is called social distancing or physical distancing.

Tips for Safer Drug Use

- Wipe down drug packaging, supplies and surfaces before use.
- Prepare your drugs yourself.
- Avoid using alone.
- 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 a syringe service program (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 works.
- If possible, prepare and administer your own injection.
- Do not lick the needle.
If you snort or sniff:
• Avoid sharing straws or anything else used to snort or sniff drugs, including materials used to cut up drugs, such as plastic cards or quarters. Wipe down the parts that you touch with your nostrils between uses with an alcohol-based wipe.

If you use pipes, bongs 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 medical provider about getting extra medication to reduce the number of trips to the pharmacy.
• If you are on medication for opioid use disorder such as methadone or buprenorphine:
  o Contact your opioid treatment provider to discuss your options for telemedicine appointments.
  o Talk to your opioid treatment provider about your options for take-home medication.

Resources

• Syringe Service Programs (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 outbreak. Visit nyc.gov/health and search for syringe service programs.

• To find naloxone near you, visit nyc.gov/naloxone. Contact community-based programs and pharmacies about naloxone availability before visiting their locations, as hours and availability may have changed as a result of responses to the COVID-19 outbreak.

• NYC Well: NYC Well staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can provide 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.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 4.27.20