

Substance use during summer events and festivals

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(<http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/report-signalez/index-eng.php>)

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Issue

June 20, 2019

For immediate release

OTTAWA – Health Canada recognizes that Canadians may choose to consume alcohol, cannabis, or other drugs while attending events, festivals and other gatherings in the summer months. While the safest option is to not consume these substances, being aware of the risks can help reduce the potential harms.

Tips to reduce health risks associated with using alcohol (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/alcohol-abuse.html>), **cannabis** (<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/campaigns/cannabis.html>) and **other drugs** (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/controlled-illegal-drugs.html>), **such as opioids**:

- Do not drive after having consumed alcohol, cannabis or other drugs. Decide who will be the designated driver before you consume any of these substances, or take a taxi, public transportation or walk.
- Do not get into a car if you suspect the driver has consumed alcohol, cannabis or other drugs, and ensure the driver does not continue driving.
- Avoid mixing substances such as alcohol, cannabis and other drugs. The results can be unpredictable and dangerous (<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+topics/health+conditions+prevention+and+treatment/drugs/the+dangers+of+mixing+drugs>).
- Illegal drugs often contain other dangerous substances, such as highly toxic opioids like fentanyl and carfentanil (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/controlled-illegal-drugs/fentanyl.html>), which can lead to overdose and death.
- Do not leave someone alone if they seem ill. Stay with them and immediately call for help.
- To buy, possess or use cannabis and alcohol, you must be of legal age (18 or 19 or older, depending on your province or territory). It is illegal to buy, possess or use other drugs that have not been prescribed to you.

Alcohol

- Use Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines (<https://www.ccsa.ca/canadas-low-risk-alcohol-drinking-guidelines-poster>) to help determine an appropriate drink limit for yourself.
- Never leave your drink unattended, and do not accept drinks—even water—from someone you do not know and trust.
- Do not mix alcohol with energy drinks. This can mask symptoms of intoxication.

Cannabis

- If you choose to consume cannabis, start with a small amount and wait until you feel the effects before taking more.
- Edible cannabis products can present unique health and safety risks. It takes longer to feel the effects of cannabis that you ingest compared to cannabis that you inhale. It can take up to four hours to feel the full effects, and consuming more within this time period can increase the risk of adverse effects.

Other drugs, such as opioids

- Never use drugs alone. Stay with your friends and people you trust.

- Never use prescription medications intended for someone else.
- If you or someone you know uses drugs, carry [naloxone](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/prescription-drug-abuse/opioids/naloxone.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/prescription-drug-abuse/opioids/naloxone.html>), which can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose.
- If someone looks unwell and you suspect that [they may have overdosed](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/problematic-prescription-drug-use/opioids/overdose.html#a2) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/problematic-prescription-drug-use/opioids/overdose.html#a2>) on drugs, do not leave them alone. Stay with them and immediately call 9-1-1 or your local emergency help line. Follow their instructions.
- Stay until help arrives. The [Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/prescription-drug-abuse/opioids/about-good-samaritan-drug-overdose-act.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/prescription-drug-abuse/opioids/about-good-samaritan-drug-overdose-act.html>) provides certain legal protections for individuals who seek emergency help during an overdose situation and who are in possession of illegal drugs themselves.

For more information:

- [Cannabis](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/campaigns/cannabis.html?utm_campaign=cannabis-18&utm_medium=vurl-en&utm_source=canada-ca_cannabis) (https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/campaigns/cannabis.html?utm_campaign=cannabis-18&utm_medium=vurl-en&utm_source=canada-ca_cannabis)
- [Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](https://www.ccsa.ca/canadas-low-risk-alcohol-drinking-guidelines-poster) (<https://www.ccsa.ca/canadas-low-risk-alcohol-drinking-guidelines-poster>)
- [Signs of an Opioid Overdose](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/prescription-drug-abuse/opioids/overdose.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/prescription-drug-abuse/opioids/overdose.html>)
- [Opioids Toolkit](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/prescription-drug-abuse/opioids/resources-toolkit.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/prescription-drug-abuse/opioids/resources-toolkit.html>)

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