

Hand Hygiene

Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for **at least 20 seconds** or use **alcohol-based hand rub**. Do this right **before you prep your drugs and after any contact with others** (e.g. when getting your drugs, using public transport and handling cash). Make sure you **dry your hands well** with paper towel or an air-dryer.

Don't Share Drugs and Equipment

Sharing drugs, vapes, bong, pipes, spoons and other injecting supplies (e.g. filters, swabs) all increase the risk of spreading COVID-19 and other germs.

Prep Your Own Drugs

Try not to let other people handle your drugs or drug supplies. When preparing drugs, wash your hands and use alcohol swabs to clean the surface you are using.

Stock Up on Equipment & Drugs

Take home extra injecting supplies the next time you go to your needle and syringe program. If you can afford to, stock up on drugs you use. **Stocking up for 2-4 weeks will help reduce your contact with others and cover you if you need to self-isolate.**

Get Naloxone

If you or someone you know uses heroin or other opioids, ask your GP or needle syringe program for some naloxone (Narcan).

Respond to Overdoses

If at any time you have to give naloxone to someone, try to use gloves, safely dispose of used naloxone kits directly into the trash after use and clean your hands.

Wipe Down Drug Bags

Avoid carrying drug bags in your body (e.g. mouth) as this may spread COVID-19 and other germs. If you do carry drug bags in your body clean the bag thoroughly with alcohol-based hand rub or alcohol swabs prior to inserting and after you take it out.

Methadone/Buprenorphine Prescribing

Ask your doctor to extend your prescription and ask to reduce the frequency of your in-person appointments. You may be able to see your doctor by telephone or video-chat instead. Remember not to miss 4 consecutive doses as your pharmacy will be unable to dispense your medication if this happens. Pharmacies will still be open during COVID-19.

Prepare for Unplanned Withdrawal

Have a back up plan in case your dealer gets sick or you are unable to get to your dealer. Be aware that unplanned alcohol and benzodiazepine (e.g. Valium) withdrawal can be very dangerous – team up with someone you trust who will be able to get you medical care if you go into withdrawal from these.

Stay Home!

Don't go out unless you need to, and stay home if you are sick. If you don't have a place to stay, limit your contact with other people.

COVID-19 + SMOKING

- **Smoking tobacco, cannabis, methamphetamine and other drugs can affect your breathing and increase your risk from COVID-19**
- Think about cutting down or stopping your smoking to protect your lung health
- If you smoke tobacco think about using nicotine replacement (e.g. patches, lozenges) and call **Quitline (13 78 48)**
- Frequently clean your smoking supplies with an alcohol wipe

COVID-19 + ALCOHOL

- **COVID-19 infection and alcohol intoxication can affect your breathing, and put you at risk of becoming seriously ill or dying**
- **Unplanned alcohol withdrawal can be dangerous** so make sure you have enough alcohol to get you through any self-isolation and seek medical advice if you are stopping alcohol use during the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 + BENZODIAZEPINES (e.g. Valium, Xanax)

- **COVID-19 infection and benzodiazepine intoxication can affect your breathing, and put you at risk of becoming seriously ill or dying**
- **Unplanned benzodiazepine withdrawal can be dangerous** so seek medical advice if you are stopping benzodiazepine use during the COVID-19 pandemic

Remember that people who use drugs commonly have weaker immune systems, respiratory (breathing) problems and other health problems that can increase the risk of being infected by COVID-19. During the COVID-19 pandemic try to stay calm, remember to manage your wellbeing and be reassured that everything that is happening is only temporary.

Help keep yourself and people around you safe by following this advice

For more trusted COVID-19 information, go to:
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>