

## At a glance

### Drugs are changing

Drugs can be contaminated with more dangerous substances, increasing the risk of harm, overdose and death.

### Steps to reduce harm

- Make sure there's someone who can help you if you overdose
- Start with a small amount and space out your doses
- Take one drug at a time



Scan to find out more about contaminated drugs

If someone **overdoses**, put them in the recovery position (or on their side) and **call 999**. If you have **naloxone**, give it.

# Get in touch

WithYou provide free and confidential services for adults and young people experiencing challenges with drugs, alcohol, or mental health.

If you're looking for support, or you're worried about someone you know, you can access support seven days a week via our webchat:

[wearewithyou.org.uk](https://wearewithyou.org.uk)



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# Contaminated drugs: reducing harm

Drugs can be contaminated with other, more **dangerous** substances. Find out how to reduce your risk of harm.



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## Drugs are changing

Any drug can be contaminated with more dangerous substances. This includes heroin, benzodiazepines, cocaine, ketamine, and THC vapes.

Contaminated drugs often look like a usual batch, but because they contain more dangerous substances, they can affect you differently. This increases the risk of harm, overdose and death.

## Find out what's in your drugs

To find out more about drug testing services, please speak to a local drug and alcohol service, or use our free, online webchat: [wearewithyou.org.uk](https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk)

## Steps to help reduce harm, overdose and death

### Try not to use on your own

It is best not to use drugs if you're on your own or in a position where nobody could help you if you overdose. A buddy system – where one person takes their hit and waits until the peak effects have worn off before the other person uses – makes it more likely that someone can help in an emergency.

### Start low, go slow

The contents and strength of your drugs can vary between batches, so even if you use drugs regularly:

- Start with a small amount
- Wait to see how it affects you
- Space out your doses

### Try not to mix

Try to take one drug at a time. Mixing different drugs, including with alcohol, can increase your risk of harm and overdose.

If you think **someone has overdosed**, put them in the recovery position (or on their side) and get help fast by **calling 999**, telling emergency services what you know.

### Signs of an overdose will depend on what's been taken, but may include:

- Not being able to wake someone up
- Difficulty breathing
- Lips or fingertips with a blue (on lighter skin) or grey (if darker skin) tinge
- Finding it difficult to walk or talk
- Confusion
- Drug paraphernalia close by

### If you have naloxone – give it.

Naloxone reverses the effects of opioid drugs like heroin, methadone and fentanyl. Drugs can contain a mixture of substances, including opioids, so use naloxone if you have it. If someone hasn't overdosed on opioids, naloxone won't harm them – but if they have, it could save their life.

