

Heroin overdoses

Harm Reduction messaging
20th August 2021

Public Health England has issued a warning due to a sharp rise in the number of overdoses potentially linked to people using heroin.

Hertfordshire have had 5 overdose cases in the last 24 hours.

Overdoses can be fatal and the safest option is not to take heroin at all, but if you do, here are 5 ways to reduce the harm associated with using **contaminated** heroin:

1. Make sure that someone you trust is nearby, and they have [naloxone](#). To get a naloxone kit, just visit or call us on 0800 652 3169.
2. Remember that smoking is safer than injecting. If you're injecting, start with a smaller amount than what you usually use.
3. Don't 'slam' your hit. Depress the plunger slowly, pausing to allow the familiar dose to take effect. If you feel it is unusually strong or sedating, pull it out.
4. Be aware of the signs of overdose and make sure anyone you live with or use with knows them too. An overdose won't always look the same but some signs to look out for are:
 - Losing muscle control (particularly in the knees or neck)
 - Pale or blue lips or fingertips
 - Very light, shallow breathing, or no breathing
 - Loud raspy snoring or gurgling noises
 - Feeling confused or disoriented, nodding into unconsciousness
 - Falling unconscious, particularly before removing the needle.

If you have any questions, or are worried about anything, you can contact us on:

Herts@cgl.org.uk

0800 652 3169 Monday 9am to 5 pm,
Tuesday to Friday 9 am to 7 pm
Saturday 9am to 5 pm

Believe in people