

COVID-19/Coronavirus

Harm minimisation advice for people who use alcohol and other drugs

What are the symptoms to look out for?



Fever/temp
≥38°C



Cough



Shortness of breath



Sore throat

Most people feel mild to moderate symptoms. It can feel like the flu or a really bad cold, or opioid withdrawal. These symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and fatigue. Symptoms can show up 2 – 14 days after exposure.

People may have COVID19 and not be aware they have it (not every body gets symptoms)!

If you have any of these symptoms you should get tested at your nearest COVID19 clinic and isolate yourself until you get your results back.

If you have coronavirus and only have mild symptoms that you can manage, you should self-isolate for 14 days to protect other people.

For COVID-19 clinic locations and opening hours, visit healthywa.wa.gov.au and search "covid clinics"

Who is more at risk?



If you consume alcohol and other drugs regularly, you may be at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 and of experiencing it more severely than the general population



If you smoke you may be at greater risk (smoking affects your lungs and can make you more prone to infection)



If you have heart disease, high blood pressure, lung diseases (asthma or emphysema), diabetes or have low immunity, you may be at greater risk



Aboriginal people may be at higher risk if have other chronic health conditions



Age is a risk factor for COVID-19 (particularly 60+) but young people can be at risk too



If you are at higher risk for COVID19, or live or spend a lot of time with someone who is, try avoid physical contact with others, and if you do see people, always maintain a minimum of 1.5m distance

If you smoke, now is a great time to quit or cut down



Call Quitline on **13 78 48** or visit makesmokinghistory.org.au

Or speak to your pharmacist or doctor

Here are some other practical things that you can do to lower your risk of getting COVID-19/Coronavirus

Wash hands regularly

- wash with soapy water for 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser, if soap and water is not available



Before and after

- using drugs
- handling money
- if in contact with other people
- being in public places, on public transport or at shops

Don't share ANY injecting equipment, pipes, bongs, joints, straws/ banknotes for snorting, cigarettes



Prepare your own drugs,

avoid handling or touching other people's drugs and equipment, and do not let people touch yours. If you need someone else to inject you, make sure they wash their hands before and after



Swab your site before you inject, keep up safe practices. You can get supplies from Peer Based Harm Reduction WA or pharmacies



Wipe down drug packages

wraps, foils, baggies and surfaces with swabs. Make sure drug bags or wraps are kept away from body fluids



Be prepared for drug shortages,

you or your supplier/s could get sick. Plan ahead by making sure you have enough drug using equipment, medication, food and drinks – you could go into withdrawal



Safe sex

use condoms if having sex or doing sex work, avoid kissing and sharing bodily fluids



If you are sick, stay in and avoid close contact with others. Keep 1.5 metres away



If you develop a fever or other COVID symptoms, contact your Doctor or go to a COVID-19 clinic to get tested.



If you are using opioids like heroin, oxycodone or morphine, you should have naloxone. It is free for anyone at risk of or likely to witness an opioid overdose from many pharmacies, drug and alcohol treatment services, Peer Based Harm Reduction WA

For full list of where you can access it, go to mhc.wa.gov.au and search "naloxone"



Be extra careful if you are also using other sedating substances such as benzodiazepines, pregabalin or alcohol
Do not use alone.
If you drop, will someone find you?



If already on opioid treatment, talk to your doctor or alcohol and other drug service about making sure you can access your medication
You may get infected, quarantined or need to self-isolate. Plan ahead.



If you are dependent on opioids, now could be a great time to get treatment
Contact the Alcohol and Drug Support Line or Peer Based Harm Reduction WA for advice.

Alcohol and Drug Support Line
Call us 24 hours a day.
9442 5000
or **1800 198 024** (country callers)
Confidential. Anonymous. Professional.
alcholdrugsupport@mhc.wa.gov.au

Peer Based Harm Reduction WA
Call **9325 8387**
Needle & syringe exchange
Support. Information. Education. Advocacy.
21 & 22/ 7 Aberdeen St, Perth
harmreductionwa.org

Need more information on COVID-19?
Call **1800 020 080**
National Coronavirus Helpline
or visit health.wa.gov.au
and click on "Coronavirus"