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**Media Release****January 29, 2026****CK Public Health Warns of Increased Drug Poisonings in Chatham-Kent**

CK Public Health is issuing an alert about an increase in drug poisonings (overdoses) and unexpected reactions to substances in Chatham-Kent. Evidence of increased risk locally is based on recent opioid-related EMS calls, emergency department visits, and suspected drug-related deaths.

Partners and people with lived experience are concerned that **medetomidine** may be present in the local drug supply, contributing to increased risk of drug poisoning. Medetomidine is a veterinary sedative, similar to xylazine (“tranq”), but significantly stronger. It may require multiple doses of naloxone to reverse an overdose.

Medetomidine can cause deep sleepiness, a slow heart rate, low blood pressure, very low or no pulse, and hallucinations. Withdrawal can occur rapidly within hours of last use and peak within 18-36 hours. Medetomidine withdrawal is considered a medical emergency and may require hospitalization. Long periods of sedation can leave people vulnerable to assault, extreme cold, or other environmental dangers.

This serves as an important reminder that the unregulated drug supply is unpredictable and always changing. Substances may not be what individuals expect, increasing the risk of harm or death.

**In case of overdose:**

- Call 911
- Give naloxone if an opioid overdose is suspected (it may take more than one dose)
- Do not leave the person unattended
- Stay with and assist the person until paramedics arrive

**If you use substances:**

- Try to avoid using alone, fix with a friend
- If using with others, take turns spotting for each other
- Have a safety plan, ask someone to check on you, leave door unlocked
- Call the National Overdose Response Service (NORS) Safer Consumption Hotline at 1-888-688-6677
- Start low and go slow, try a test dose first
- Check your drugs with test strips
- Be aware of your tolerance
- Try to avoid mixing drugs
- Know the quality of your drugs
- Ask others about what they are experiencing with the current drug supply

Share this warning to help raise awareness and reduce the risk of drug poisonings. To learn more about where you can get a free naloxone kit visit [www.ckphu.com/harm-reduction](http://www.ckphu.com/harm-reduction). To view the most recent Opioid Surveillance Report visit [www.ckphu.com/opioids](http://www.ckphu.com/opioids)

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