

Harm Reduction Strategies in Montréal

Observations from fact-finding mission
January 17-18, 2019



OFFICE OF MAYOR MARC C. MCGOVERN
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Overview

Meet with supervised injection services (SIS) operators, city officials, and community leaders to understand:

- Montréal's experience putting into practice opioid-use related harm reduction strategies
- The impact those policies have had on individuals with opioid addiction
- How SIS facilities interact with the surrounding neighborhoods
- The provincial-municipal partnerships that support SIS operations

Delegation included members of the Cambridge Opioid Work Group

- Work Group Co-chair Dr. Branville Bard, Police Commissioner
- Claude Jacob, Chief Public Health Officer
- Dr. Mark Albanese, Director of Cambridge Health Alliance's Adult Psychiatry and Addiction Services
- Dr. Ellie Grossman, Cambridge Health Alliance's primary care lead for behavioral health integration
- Wilford Durbin, Chief of Staff.

Site Visits & Discussions

SIS Facilities

- Spectre de rue
- SIS CACTUS Montreal
- L'Anonyme (mobile facility)
- Dopamine

Municipal/Community Partners

- Mayor Valerie Plante, City of Montreal
- Ministry of Health and Social Services
- City of Montreal Police Department
- Mayor of Borough Mercier-Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
- Integrated University Health and Social Services Centres (CIUSSS)
- Mission Old Brewery
- GRIP Montreal



Effectiveness of harm reduction

Comparative effects associated with the addition of harm reduction measures to injection equipment access programs (Cloutier 2013)

	Access to injection equipment	Access to injection equipment and supervised injection services	Access to injection equipment, supervised injection services and prescription of injectable opioids
Characteristics	Users have access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">sterile injection equipmentcounselingreferral to rehabilitation services	Users have access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">sterile injection equipmentcounselingreferral to rehabilitation servicessupervised injection	Users have access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">sterile injection equipmentcounselingreferral to rehabilitation servicessupervised injectionopiate therapy
Effects	↓ equipment sharing ↓ HIV Injection in public places = ↓ syringes discarded in public places Crime =	↓↓↓ equipment sharing ↓↓↓ HIV, ↓ HCV ↓↓↓ injection in public places ↓↓↓ syringes discarded in public places Crime =	↓↓↓↓ equipment sharing ↓↓↓↓ HIV, ↓↓↓ HCV ↓↓↓ injection in public places ↓↓↓ syringes discarded in public places ↓ Crime

Caption:

↓: Decrease
↓↓: Greater decrease
↓↓↓: Significant decrease
= No change

SOURCE : GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC, 2014: 23

“Harm Reduction Services in Québec: Access to injection and inhalation equipment and supervised injection services; Prevention and response to opioid overdoses,” Richard Cloutier, M. Nurs. Public Health General Direction

SIS Operation



Injection users wait in a community common room with treatment information, coffee, and care providers

People are escorted to the injection room, most have time/injection limits

Materials provided: alcohol swabs, sterile cooker, sterile water, syringe, tourniquet, filter, fentanyl test strip

Room is equipped with defibrillator, oxygen, heart rate monitor, naloxone

Any illicit material left on site is secured and turned over to police for analysis, results reported back to community

“Bat phone” in injection room

SIS Operation Continued



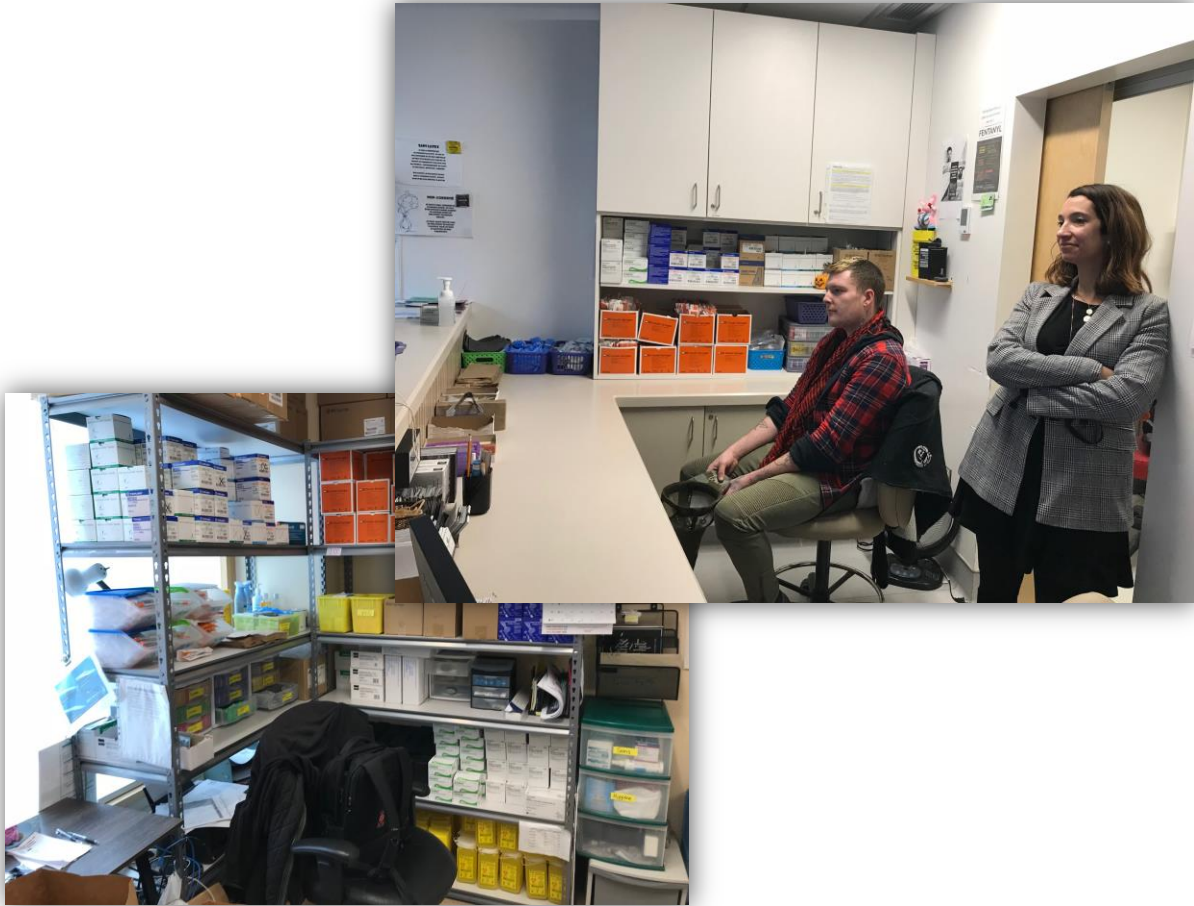
Centralized information system

- Follows injection users across SIS sites
- Visitors give a nickname to access services (“Superman,” “Spiderman,” etc.)
- Name and information is not verified
- Allows service providers to advise visitors on dangers of certain drug mixtures

Overdose Prevention Services (OPS)

- Shortage of nurses in Montreal
- Unlike supervised/safe injection services (SIS), OPS facilities do not have a nurse on duty
- During emergency, service providers take person out of overdose and call ambulance
- When nurse is present, overdose is handled onsite

Drop in Center: Access to Preventative Materials



Injection users can either use SIS facility, or access sterile materials, or both

Available for Pickup:

- Syringes, sterile cooker, swabs, etc.
- Condoms
- PREP
- Fentanyl Strips
- Sexual health information
- Harm reduction information on various drugs

Nested Services: “Put social workers into the basic fabric of services”

Jobs Program

- Day labor offered average 3.5 hours per day, cash payments at end of each day
- Wages do go to addiction, but were earned through legitimate labor, contributing to society
- Good behavior leads to more hours, end goal of contracted service with local company

Day Programs

- Outreach programs to drug users, sex workers, homeless
- Defend rights to health care, educate, destigmatize, advocate for drug user community, HIV prevention

Access to counseling and recovery programs

- Low threshold programs
- Constituent efforts in low threshold lead to higher-threshold services

Public syringe drop/off boxes

Good Neighbors Committee

> Organizations offering SIS are already providing:

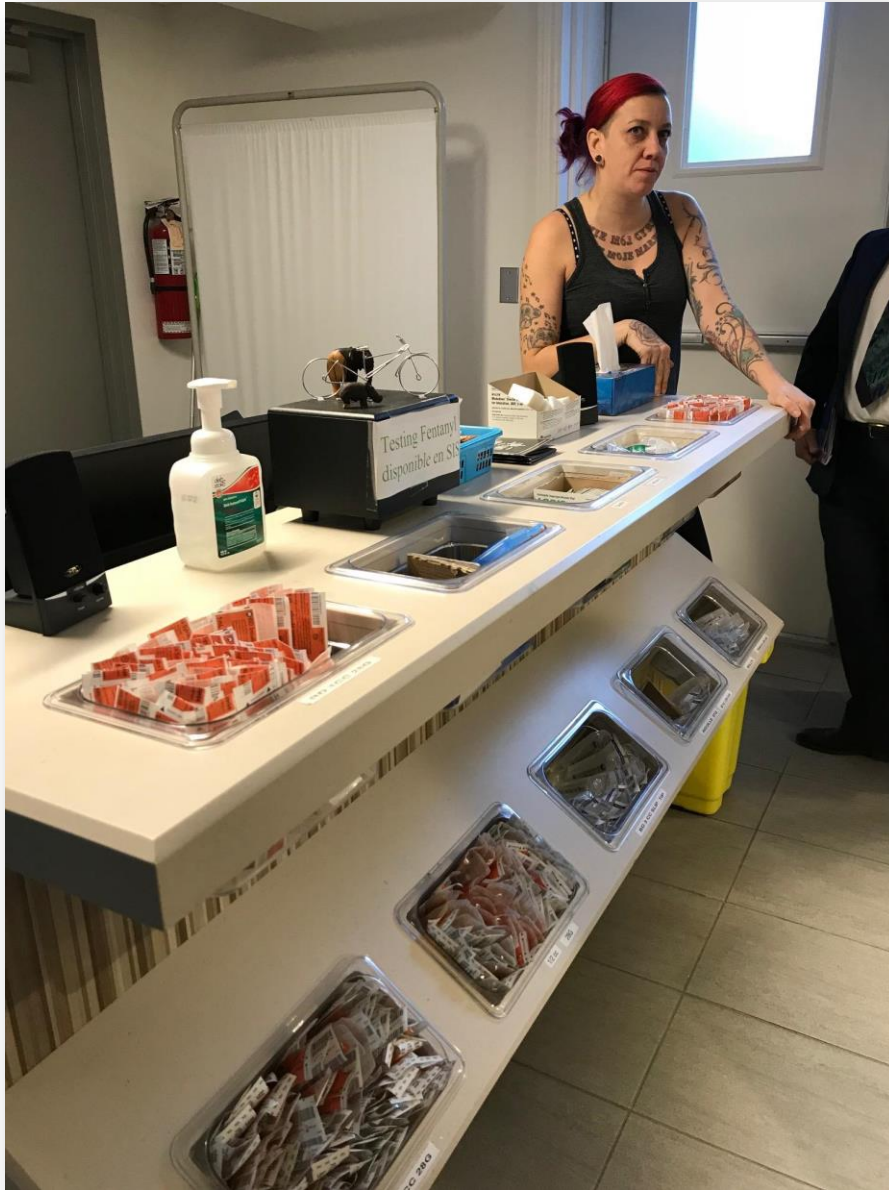
- access to sterile injection equipment
- HIV and HCV screening by public health nurses
- basic health services, counselling and medical referral
- social services, addiction treatment
- training and job placement services.



Santé
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Québec 

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Public Health General Direction







Mobile SIS: L'Anonyme



Becoming a popular model in Canada

Operators see higher percentage of women users

Monitor for sex exploitation and STD prevention core to mission

Cover 12 neighborhoods in one night, on call

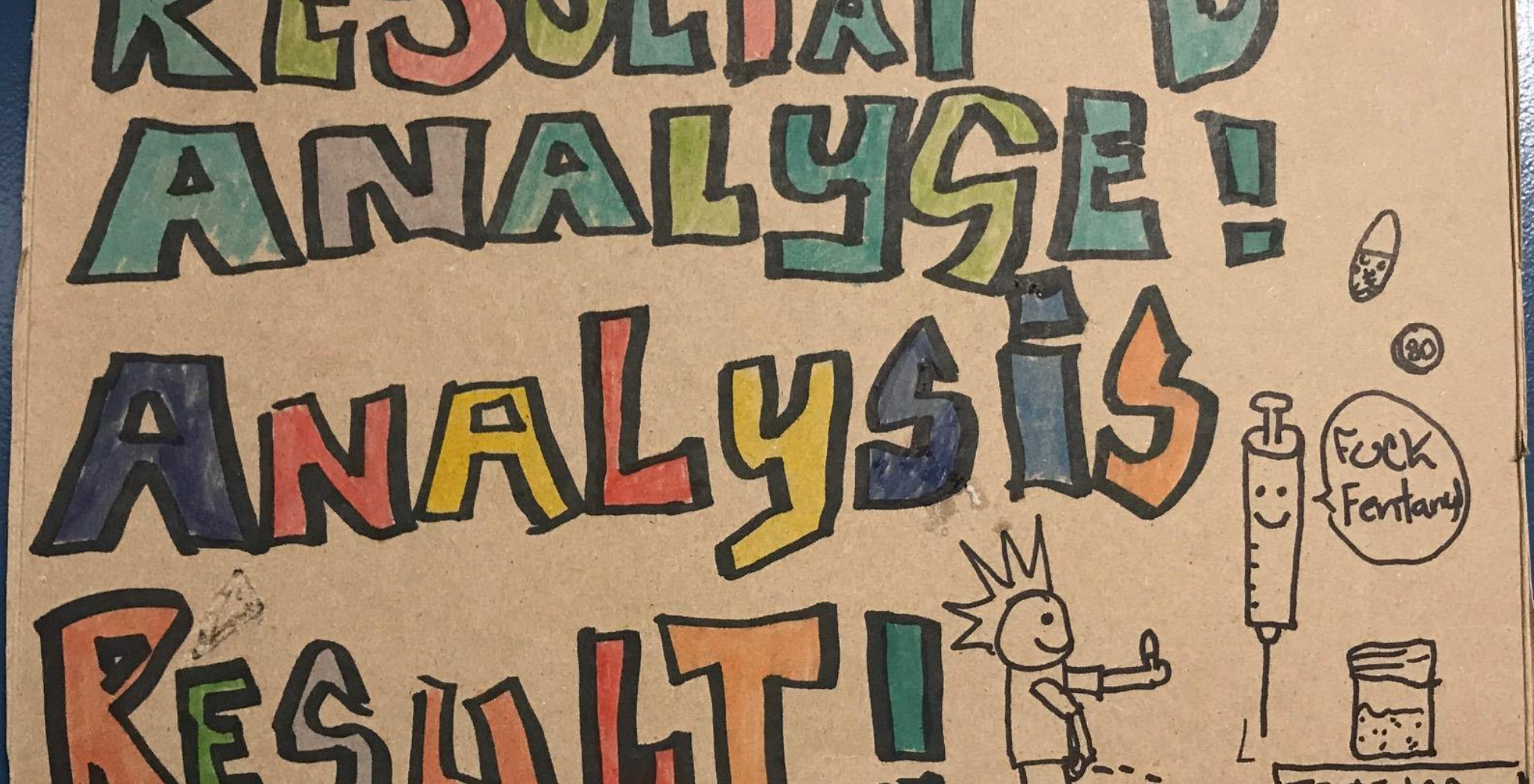
Estimated 40% of users are homeless

Two psycho-social workers on bus as all times

Received more support than pushback from community

One-on-one distribution in the back, encourages counseling, some testing of drugs, prevent and treat soft tissue infections





Other Harm Reduction Strategies

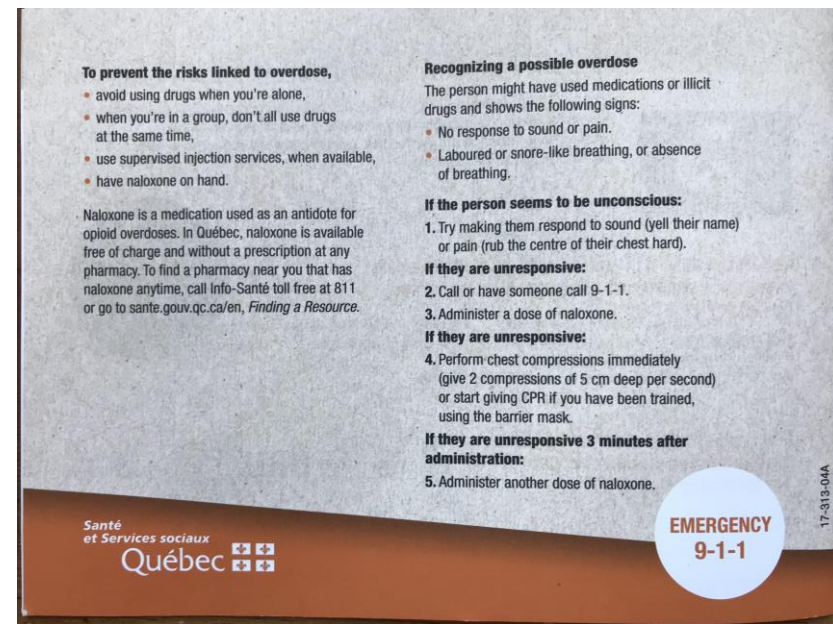
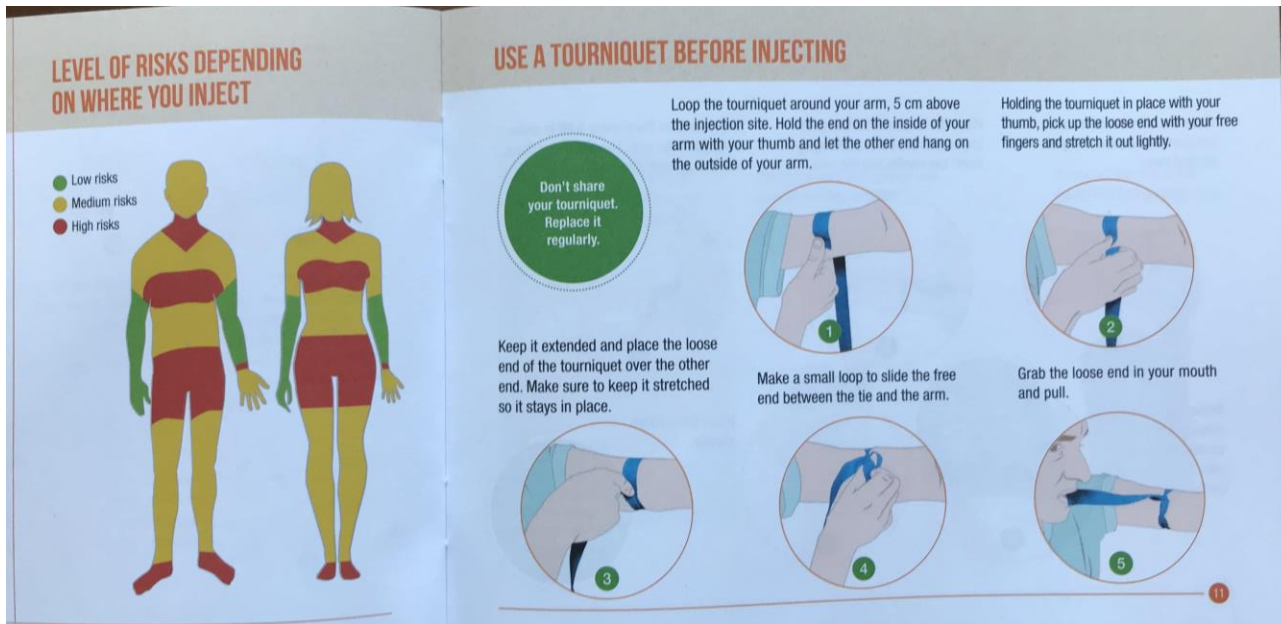
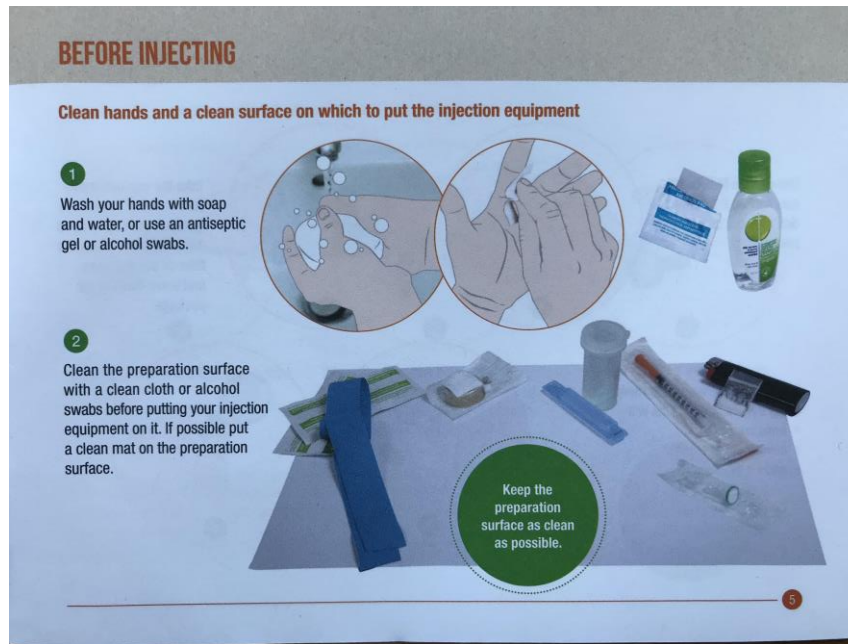
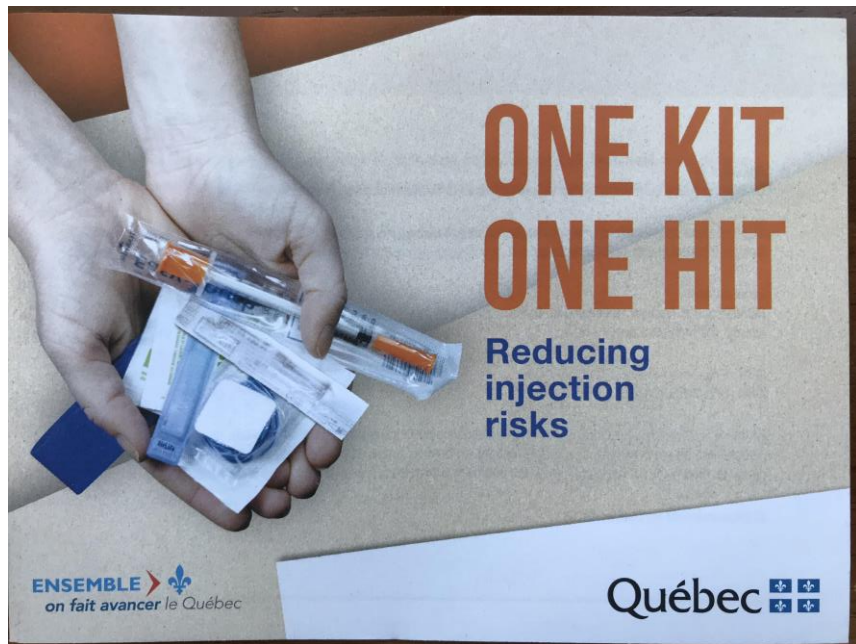
Number of injection material centers in Quebec (2014)

Région	CLSC	Hospitals	Private clinics	Rehab centers	Pharmacies	Community group	Total
Bas-Saint-Laurent	16	8	1	9	55	1	90
Saguenay–Lac-Saint-Jean	8	6			27	8	49
Capitale-Nationale	27	7	8		113	6	161
Mauricie et Centre-du-Québec	19	10			5	12	46
Estrie	12	8	3	1	47	3	74
Montréal	19				231	24	274
Outaouais	17	6	1		26	2	52
Abitibi-Témiscamingue	14	6		3	12	5	40
Côte-Nord	22	7			16	1	46
Nord-du-Québec	2	5			4		11
Gaspésie–Îles-de-la-Madeleine	18	2			20		40
Chaudière-Appalaches	16	5			30		51
Laval	5		1		49	5	60
Lanaudière	7	2			50	4	63
Laurentides	12	5	1	1	23	7	49
Montréal	35	9	5		84	6	139
Total	249	86	20	14	792	84	1245

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Pharmacies #1
Distributors of
Injection
Materials

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How to use test strips to detect fentanyl and some of its analogues

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

POSITIVE contains fentanyl or certain analogues



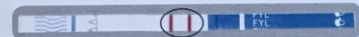
The sample contains fentanyl or some of its analogues. The test doesn't determine the concentration. The fact that the result appears slowly or quickly doesn't provide information on the concentration of fentanyl in the sample tested.

INDETERMINATE considered positive



Interpretation of results showing two coloured lines of different intensities is limited; consider it positive or repeat the test, to be safe.

NEGATIVE doesn't contain fentanyl



Using substances obtained on the black market is never 100% safe. Other powerful substances similar to fentanyl could be in the drug.

INVALID



Repeat the test. Test strips with no control bar (on the right) should be thrown out.

Regardless of the result, if you decide to use the substance, do the following:

- Use SIS.
- Avoid using alone.
- Test the effects of the substance: reduce the dose.
- When several people use together, avoid using all at the same time; identify who has naloxone and knows how to use it.
- Call 911 if there is an overdose.

! The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act can protect witnesses of overdoses who call 911 from charge against simple possession.

Centre intégré
universitaire de santé
et de services sociaux
du Centre-Sud de
l'Île de Montréal
Québec

How to use test strips to detect fentanyl and some of its analogues.

The test kit is intended for drug users to reduce risks of overdose.

Montréal's regional public health department is looking to collect information on the presence of fentanyl in drugs so it can better inform drug users and improve its interventions. To participate, please fill out the anonymous online questionnaire: bit.ly/fentanylMTL

While not obligatory, your participation is very important!

CONTENTS OF THE TEST KIT



** Keep the test strips at a temperature between 2 and 30 °C **

STEP 1 PREPARE THE CONTAINER



Pour 2.5 cc of water in the cup (up to the first line from the bottom).

Take the test strip out of its package just before doing the test.

All forms of substances can be tested, except those to which an acidifier (vitamin C, vinegar) has been added.

The strips are not 100% accurate.

STEP 2 PREPARE THE SAMPLE FOR TESTING

Only a very small amount of the substance is needed, since the test is very sensitive.

Using a syringe

This testing method is the most reliable.



Prepare the drug as usual and add a drop into the cup.



Using the wooden end of the applicator, stir for 30 seconds.

Using the cup, tablet, rock of plastic bag



Soak the cotton swab on the end of the applicator in the water for 3 seconds.



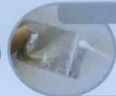
After the usual preparation and once the cup has been emptied, run the damp end of the applicator in the bottom of the cup.

or



Break the tablet or rock and run the damp end of the applicator along the broken edge.

or



Run the damp end of the applicator along the edge of the previously emptied small bag.



Stir the cotton swab on the end of the applicator in the cup for 30 seconds.



Press the cotton swab on the side of the cup to remove as much liquid as possible.

STEP 3 TEST THE SUBSTANCE



Dip the white end of the test strip into the solution and leave it there for 15 seconds. Be careful not to go past the blue line.



Remove the test strip, place it on a flat surface and let it dry for 5 minutes.

After 10 minutes, the result is no longer valid.



Administration of naloxone
by injection

POSSIBLE OPIOID OVERDOSE: WHAT TO DO

RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE OVERDOSE

The person might have used medications or illicit drugs
and shows the following signs:



No response
to sound or pain



Laboured or snore-like
breathing, or absence
of breathing

The person seems to be unconscious

1 TRY MAKING THEM RESPOND TO SOUND OR PAIN



YELL their name
TALK TO THEM loudly

RUB the centre of their
chest (sternum) hard

They are unresponsive

2 CALL OR HAVE SOMEONE CALL **911**

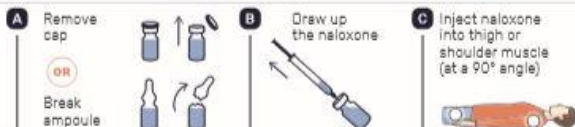
IF YOU ARE ON YOUR OWN WITHOUT A PHONE:

- Inject a dose of naloxone
- Perform chest compressions for 2 min
- Lay the person on their side
- Find a way to call 911 and follow instructions



They are unresponsive

3 INJECT A DOSE OF NALOXONE



They are unresponsive

4 PERFORM CHEST COMPRESSIONS IMMEDIATELY



GIVE 2 compressions
(5 cm deep) per second

OR

START giving CPR if you
have been trained,
using the barrier mask

They are unresponsive 3 min after injection

5 INJECT ANOTHER DOSE OF NALOXONE

REPEAT STEPS 4 AND 5
as long as the person
is unresponsive

Out of naloxone?
Continue chest compressions
or CPR until help arrives

IF THE PERSON WAKES UP...

Lay them on their side. Explain what just happened and how it's important that they be seen by a health professional.
The risk of another overdose after the first one is high because naloxone has a short duration of action.
Tell the person that they should not use opioids in the next few hours to avoid another overdose.
Stay with them while waiting for help. The Good Samaritan Law provides protection for overdose witnesses and victims.

- Store naloxone in a cool, dark place
- Check the expiry date
- Do not fill the syringes in advance
- Naloxone can be injected through light clothing
- Dispose of used syringes and needles safely

Adapted from a poster created by
the Institut national d'excellence en
santé et en services sociaux

Québec

Médicaments opiacés injectés

Oxycodone (Oxycontin®, OxyNEO®, Percocet®, etc.), Hydromorphone
(Dilaudio®, Hydromorph Contin®, etc.), fentanyl, morphine, codéine, etc.

« si tu choisis de consommer, choisis aussi de t'informer »

Cigarette électronique

E-cigarette, vapoteuse, vape.

« Si tu choisis de consommer, choisis aussi de t'informer »

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