

Opioid Overdose Cluster Protocol Emergency Department (ED) – Algorithm

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Cluster Definition

An overdose cluster is the identification of a pattern of opioid overdoses with an unusual or abnormal presentation. ED Clinicians may be triggered by presentations such as:

- Multiple acquaintances overdosing at one time or suspicion of group of overdoses occurring from a single batch of drugs
- Increase in cases with novel presentation, i.e. need to use high levels of narcan
- Increase in cases with novel risk factors, i.e. marijuana use only, primarily non-opioid drug use, e.g. crack cocaine

The purpose of this protocol is:

- A. Notification** to ensure that health service, public health, RCMP, (and community partners if required) are coordinated in acute response, gather required information, and provide accurate information to public/media.
- B. Investigation** to identify risk factors leading to the cluster (host, agent, environment), including presence/type of drug contamination and characteristics of affected population.
- C. Cluster Response** to mitigate acute risk and prevent additional events.

