

## “New” drug circulating in Ontario’s unregulated fentanyl supply: Nefopam

April 2, 2026

Ontario’s Drug Checking Community and its flagship program, [Toronto’s Drug Checking Service](#), have detected a “new” drug in Ontario’s unregulated fentanyl supply: [nefopam \(Acupan\)](#). Specifically, nefopam has been found in fentanyl samples collected in Toronto, Peterborough, and Kingston.

Nefopam is a non-opioid pain-relieving drug that is used to help treat moderate to severe pain, particularly after surgery. How nefopam relieves pain is not well understood, but it appears to block pain messages from being sent to the brain or stop the brain from noticing pain messages. While it is not approved for use in Canada or the United States, it is approved and used in many other regions of the world like the United Kingdom, parts of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

We first detected nefopam in fentanyl samples collected in Toronto and Peterborough and checked on March 12, 2026. Between March 12 – March 25, nefopam presented in 12% (12 of 102) of the fentanyl samples checked by our provincial public health and safety program.

The presence of nefopam is not believed to be as noteworthy as some of the other contaminants we regularly find in the fentanyl supply – like veterinary tranquilizers, benzodiazepine-related drugs, or nitazene opioids – but we felt it was a valuable update to share with our community.

Being exposed to nefopam may cause:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Drowsiness and dizziness
- Excessive sweating
- Agitation
- Fast heart rate
- Stimulant-like effects
- At high doses: difficulty peeing (urinary retention), hallucinations, confusion, seizures

**Importantly, nefopam is not known to cause respiratory or central nervous system depression but may be associated with minimal sedation.**

## **These adverse effects, risks, and challenges are increased when...**

1. Nefopam is being used unknowingly
2. The amount of nefopam used is unknown
3. Nefopam is unknowingly used in combination with high-potency opioids, central nervous and/or respiratory system depressants

**...which are almost always the case given the extreme contamination and unpredictability of our unregulated fentanyl supply.**

Review [our tips and help](#) to reduce the harms associated with using drugs from an unregulated supply.

We are continuing to monitor this trend and will keep the community informed as we learn more. To interact with our data, visit [www.drugchecking.community](http://www.drugchecking.community).

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**About us:** Ontario's Drug Checking Community is a national authority and primary source of timely and comprehensive data on Canada's unregulated drug supply. This public health and safety program, which is the provincial expansion of [Toronto's Drug Checking Service](#), analyzes samples of drugs and used drug equipment donated by people who use drugs with [gold standard mass spectrometry technologies](#) at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Clinical Laboratory and Diagnostic Services) or St. Michael's Hospital (Department of Laboratory Medicine). Technologies used and methods developed from checking tens of thousands of the most complex samples are the best currently available to communities in Ontario for checking unregulated opioids. This is critical because the contamination and unpredictability of the unregulated opioid (and, specifically, fentanyl) supply continues to be the primary driver of fatal and non-fatal drug poisoning, among other harms. The [program's findings](#) are translated and publicly available to prevent drug-related harm and inform evidence-based responses to the ongoing toxic opioid supply crisis, which include prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery, and community safety efforts.

**Acknowledgements:** We acknowledge the members of our communities that have lost their lives – both in the ongoing toxic opioid supply crisis and long before.

We acknowledge that racialized communities and survivors of colonization are disproportionately impacted by the toxic opioid supply crisis.

We acknowledge that we operate on Indigenous land, which is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Our program is coordinated from Toronto, which is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples.

We know that many of the samples we check are linked to fatal or non-fatal overdose, as well as adverse health events – we acknowledge the people and pain behind the data we share.

We acknowledge that our work is only possible – and we only have access to this data – because people who use drugs donate their drugs to our program in an effort to reduce the harms associated with using unregulated substances and facilitate community-led drug market monitoring and education. We are incredibly fortunate to be trusted by people who use drugs throughout the province.

We acknowledge our collection sites, which are community agencies that are deeply committed to bettering the lives of people who use drugs, have existing and trusting relationships with people who use drugs, and truly understand what it means to provide care and reduce harm, including Casey House (Toronto) | DIY Community Health (Timmins) | Fourcast Consumption and Treatment Service (Peterborough) | Fred Victor (Toronto) | Integrated Care Hub (Kingston) | NorWest Community Health Centres (Thunder Bay) | Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre: Parkdale site (Toronto) | South Riverdale Community Health Centre: Moss Park site (Toronto) | Street Health (Toronto) | The Neighbourhood Group: Kensington Market Overdose Prevention Site (Toronto) | Toronto Shelter and Support Services: Harm Reduction Unit (Toronto).

We acknowledge that almost all of our samples have been collected by supervised consumption sites. We acknowledge the collection sites lost by our program due to the closure of their supervised consumption service: Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre: Queen West site (Toronto) | Regent Park Community Health Centre (Toronto) | South Riverdale Community Health Centre: KeepSix site (Toronto) | The Works at Toronto Public Health (Toronto).

Our program is coordinated by a small central team that operates from within the Drug Checking Unit at MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions, Unity Health Toronto. **We are committed to ensuring our public health and safety program adds value to the communities it serves. If you have any questions, comments, or feedback, please get in touch.**

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