

Toronto RAAM Clinics (Due to COVID-19 outbreak, please call ahead.)

Anishnawbe Health Toronto

179 Gerrard St. E (TEMPORARY LOCATION)
416-657-0379 ext. 234
Mon 9:00–12:00, Wed & Thurs 1:00–4:00
(Indigenous patients)

Michael Garron Hospital

825 Coxwell Ave., 1st Floor, Admitting/Registration
416-469-6580 ext. 2517
Virtual care only – please call

North York General Hospital

(Addiction Services for York Region partnership)
4001 Leslie St., 8th Floor
289-221-4839 or 1-888-399-8342
Mon 12:00–2:00, Wed 10:00–12:00 (virtual care)

St. Joseph's Health Centre

30 The Queensway, 1st Floor
416-530-6486 ext. 3969
Tues & Thurs 10:00–11:30

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

2075 Bayview Ave., Room A146
416-480-6736 or raamclinic@sunnybrook.ca
Virtual appointments available Mon 5:00–7:00, Wed
2:00–4:00, Fri 10:00–12:00

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

100 Stokes St., 3rd Floor
416-535-8501 (Access CAMH)
Mon, Wed, & Fri 10:00–2:00

St. Michael's Hospital FHT

St. James Town Health Centre
410 Sherbourne St., 1st Floor
416-864-3082
Wed 12:00–4:00 (pregnant patients)

St. Michael's Hospital

30 Bond St., 17th Floor, CC Wing
416-864-3082
Mon, Wed, & Fri 9:00–11:00

Humber River Hospital

(Addiction Services for York Region partnership)
1235 Wilson Ave., 5th Floor
289-221-4839 or 1-888-399-8342
Tues 3:00–5:00, Thurs 12:30–2:30 (virtual care)

Toronto Western Hospital

399 Bathurst St., 1st Floor, WW1-414
416-726-5052
Mon & Wed 9:00–11:00, Fri 1:30–3:30

Women's College Hospital

76 Grenville St., 3rd Floor
416-323-7559 ext. 6
Mon, Tues, & Thurs 10:00–12:00

Problematic Opioid Use: Your options for treatment

Opioids are powerful narcotics with painkilling properties. Although many opioids are prescribed by doctors to help people cope with pain, they can be dangerous. Some people become **addicted** to opioids: they experience cravings and **withdrawal symptoms**, and have **difficulty stopping their use** even when they want to. Opioid use also puts you at risk for **overdose**: opioids work by relaxing the nervous system, making us less aware of pain. If the nervous system gets **too** relaxed, it can stop performing survival functions like breathing, sometimes leading to death.

It can be very hard to accept that your opioid use is problematic; it's normal to feel ashamed, frightened, or angry, and you might not be ready to stop. This pamphlet contains information about how to **increase your safety** and **decrease your chance of dying** from an accidental overdose, and how to **seek help** for an opioid addiction.

For more information, please visit
www.metaphi.ca.

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What's a RAAM clinic?

Rapid access addiction medicine (RAAM) clinics are drop-in clinics for people looking for help with their substance use. The people working at these clinics know how difficult it is to ask for help. **You don't need an appointment** to attend this clinic – just show up during clinic hours with your health card.

Your history

The clinic team will begin by asking you about your history of opioid use: when and how you started using opioids, how much and how frequently you use, the ways that opioid use has affected your life, and so on. Try to remember the clinic team is not there to judge you, and will be most able to treat you if you're **completely open** about your opioid use. The point of these questions is not to make you feel guilty or defensive, but to get a complete picture of you in order to determine how to help you.

Your diagnosis

Based on your history, the RAAM clinic team may diagnose you with an **opioid use disorder**, which is a **problematic opioid habit** that results in **negative life consequences**. It is a **treatable condition**, and with help, people **can and do recover**.

People who experience withdrawal symptoms when they stop using opioids may be offered opioid agonist therapy. **Methadone** and **buprenorphine** are both long-acting opioids that prevent withdrawal for a full 24 hours, helping people through the early days of recovery. Taking these medications **is not “cheating,”** and **doesn't mean that you are “not really sober.”** The physical and psychological symptoms of withdrawal are very real, and the medications prevent these symptoms, allowing you to focus on establishing a healthy lifestyle.



Counselling

The RAAM clinic team may refer you to counselling as part of your treatment. Counselling can help people address the reasons for their opioid use and come up with new and healthier ways to cope with difficult emotions. Counselling programs can include education on opioids and healthy lifestyle choices, group and individual therapy sessions, help with developing coping skills, cognitive behavioural therapy, and peer support groups. The team will work with you to determine what form of counselling would be most helpful for you.

Chronic pain

Many people with opioid use disorders suffer from chronic pain, and worry that stopping their opioids will worsen that pain. However, it's likely that your pain will actually get **better** if you

stop using opioids. If you're on a high opioid dose, you could be experiencing withdrawal several times a day as the opioid wears off, and while you're in withdrawal your pain will be much worse. Treatment will resolve these withdrawal symptoms, so your pain will improve.

If you're not ready to stop

If you're not ready to stop using opioids yet, follow these tips to increase your safety and decrease your chance of dying from an accidental overdose:

1. **Never use alone.** Make sure you have a buddy with you, and make sure you both know the signs of overdose so you know when to call for help.
2. **Watch your dose.** Your tolerance goes down very quickly after you haven't used for a while (even just a few days), so if you're using for the first time after a period of abstinence, use a much smaller dose than usual.
3. **Don't inject.** This is the most dangerous way of taking opioids.
4. **Don't mix,** especially other sedative substances like alcohol or benzos.
5. **Always carry naloxone** so you can temporarily reverse an overdose. Visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/where-get-free-naloxone-kit> to find out where you can get a free naloxone kit and training.