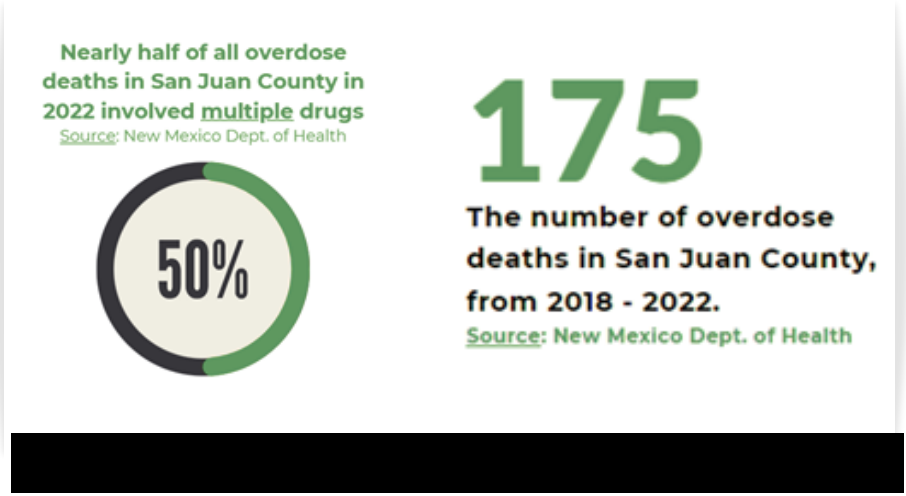
POLYSUBSTANCE USE



What is polysubstance use?
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Using more than one drug or substance at a time is common – but can be dangerous. This includes taking alcohol with other substances, such as prescription medication or other drugs.

Polysubstance use is sometimes intentional, like when someone takes multiple drugs to increase their effects. Polysubstance use can also be unintentional, such as when drugs have been laced with fentanyl.

Whether intentional or not, mixing drugs or medications, or mixing drugs with alcohol increases the risks – because the effects from combining the substances is stronger, unpredictable, and increases the risk of overdose.

BE SAFE AND AVOID THE DANGERS OF POLYSUBSTANCE USE

Mixing alcohol with other drugs is not safe.

Drinking alcohol in combination with other drugs can increase your risk of overdose and serious health problems, like damage to the brain, heart, liver and other organs.

What about prescription medication?

Yes, the risks of polysubstance use do apply to prescription drugs. Be sure to tell your doctor what drugs you are taking to prevent interactions with new medications. Never take pills that did not come from a pharmacy and weren't prescribed to you.

Mixing stimulants and depressants

Mixing stimulants and depressants does not balance or cancel out their effects. In fact, the results of combining drugs are unpredictable, and can even mask the effects of one or both drugs. This may trick you into thinking that the drugs are not affecting you, making it easier to overdose.
Combining depressants or stimulants, or mixing them, can cause serious harm to the body, including damage to the brain, liver and other organs, and can greatly increase the risk of overdose.

Combining depressants (or "downers") like alcohol and opioids, can intensify their effects, such as slowing down breathing. Mixing stimulants, like meth or other uppers, can increase the heart rate or blood pressure to dangerous levels.

Examples of stimulants and depressants: Alcohol is a depressant. Opioids are also depressants, including prescription pain medication, like oxycodone or hydrocodone, as well as fentanyl and heroin. Benzodiazepines like Valium and Xanax are also depressants. Methamphetamine, amphetamine (speed) are types of stimulants.

Safe Use Can Prevent an Overdose

Know how and when to take your medications

If you are taking more than one medication make sure that you know what can be taken together and what might cause interactions.

Know what you are taking

Don't take unknown pills or mix pills with each other unless you have asked a doctor or pharmacist about possible interactions.

Don't mix alcohol with other drugs

Using alcohol at the same time as medications or other drugs can cause harmful and dangerous effects and can lead to an overdose.

If you take any kind of opioid make sure friends & family have Naloxone / Narcan & know how to use it

Naloxone is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. It is not long acting so the person administering naloxone will still need to call 911 and / or monitor you.

To learn more about safe use

https://harmreduction.org/

San Juan County PARTNERSHIP

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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