

# Opioid trends in Halton: Naloxone kits (2022)

## Health indicator report

### Background

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- The purpose of this health indicator report is to provide information on the distribution of naloxone kits in Halton.
- Opioids are a class of drugs that includes illegal drugs, such as heroin, and prescription drugs, such as codeine and morphine. Opioids impact the part of the brain that controls breathing, which can lead to a life-threatening overdose.<sup>1</sup>
- If given in time, opioid overdoses can be temporarily reversed through the administration of a drug called naloxone.<sup>2</sup>
- The Halton harm reduction program has distributed naloxone kits to opioid users and their friends and family members since February 2017. Each kit contains two doses of intranasal naloxone.
- Many pharmacies in Halton also dispense naloxone kits through the Ontario Naloxone Program for Pharmacies.
- Harm Reduction activities continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This health indicator report uses data from the Halton harm reduction program and Ontario Naloxone Program for Pharmacies (Ministry of Health).

### Key findings

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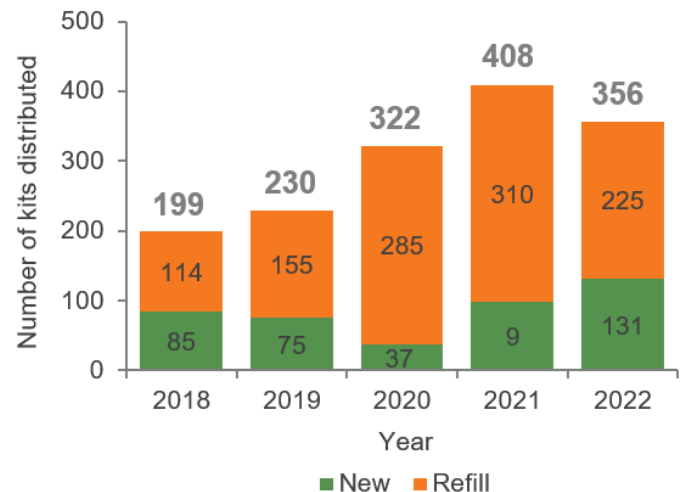
- The Halton harm reduction program distributed 356 naloxone kits in Halton during 2022. The majority of these were refill kits, meaning they were given to an individual who claimed to have received a naloxone kit and appropriate training previously, from any source.
- In 2022, most kits distributed by the Halton harm reduction program were given out in Burlington and Oakville, which is to be expected as they are the most populous municipalities in Halton.
- In 2022, Halton pharmacies dispensed more than 4,500 naloxone kits, a 34% increase compared to 2021.



# Naloxone kits

## Trends over time

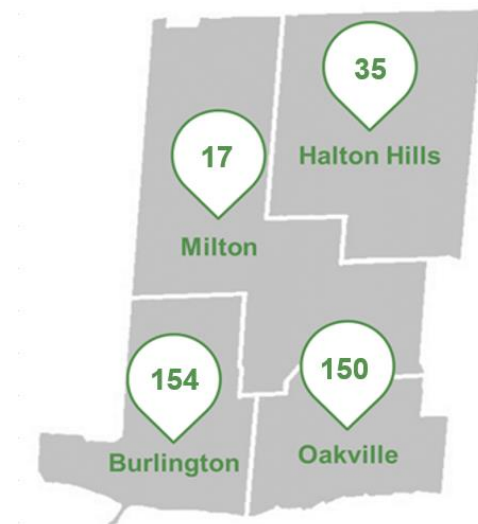
- In 2022, 356 naloxone kits were distributed by Halton Region's harm reduction program. This included 131 new kits and 225 refill kits.
- The number of kits distributed by the harm reduction program increased between 2018 (199 kits) and 2021 (408 kits) before decreasing slightly in 2022.



Number of naloxone kits distributed by the Halton harm reduction program, by new or refill status, Halton Region, February 2018-2022

## Municipality

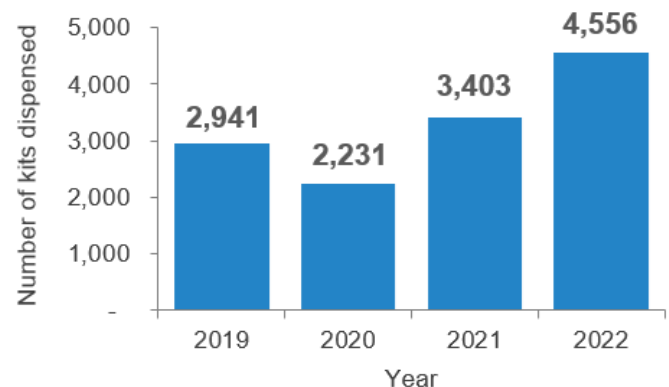
- In 2022, most naloxone kits (new and refill combined) were distributed in Burlington (154 kits), followed by Oakville (150 kits). This is expected, since they are the most populous municipalities in Halton.



Number of naloxone kits distributed by the Halton harm reduction program, by municipality, Halton Region, 2022

## Pharmacy-dispensed naloxone kits

- In 2022, Halton pharmacies dispensed 4,556 naloxone kits, representing a 34% increase compared to 2021 (3,403 kits).



Number of naloxone kits distributed by pharmacies in Halton Region, 2022

# Data notes

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## Definitions:

**Naloxone kit** refers to a kit containing two doses of intranasal naloxone.

**New kit** is an intra-nasal naloxone kit given to an individual who claims never to have received a naloxone kit before, meaning the individual must be provided training at the time of kit distribution. This is based on self-report, as well as recollection of the outreach worker; there is no formal tracking to confirm whether this individual has ever received a kit before.

**Refill kit** is an intranasal naloxone kit given to an individual who claims to have received a naloxone kit and appropriate training previously, from any source. This is based on self-report, as well as recollection of the outreach worker; there is no formal tracking to confirm whether this individual has ever received a kit before. Reasons for obtaining a refill kit include having used the previous kit for an overdose, having given the kit to a friend, or having lost or damaged the kit.

**Pharmacy-dispensed naloxone kit** refers to an injectable or intra-nasal kit distributed by a pharmacy located in Halton through the Ontario Naloxone Program for Pharmacies. This can include an initial naloxone emergency kit, a replacement naloxone emergency kit, an intra-nasal naloxone kit, a two-dose intra-nasal naloxone kit, a two-dose naloxone emergency kit (one initial and one replacement), or a two-dose naloxone emergency kit (two replacements). The individuals who kits are dispensed to do not necessarily reside within Halton Region.

## Limitations:

Since clients obtaining refill kits are repeat clients, the number of kits distributed should not be interpreted as the number of unique recipients. Clients may or may not obtain kits where they live, and they may obtain more than one kit per encounter.

The Halton harm reduction program also provides naloxone kits to community agencies for them to distribute to their own clients. These kits have not been captured in this report.

## Data Source:

Naloxone kit data: Naloxone Neo database, Ministry of Health, extracted Nov. 16, 2023.

Naloxone kits, Halton pharmacies (Ontario Naloxone Program for Pharmacies): Ministry of Health (MOH), 2023, received Sep. 13, 2023.

## References

1. Health Canada. 2023. About Opioids. Accessed November 2023 from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/problematic-prescription-drug-use/opioids/about.html>
2. Health Canada. 2023. Naloxone. Accessed November 2023 from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/problematic-prescription-drug-use/opioids/naloxone.html>

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