Opioid Overdose Response



Opioids are generally used to treat pain. They include prescription painkillers, heroin, and fentanyl. All opioids put people at risk of an overdose.

In an overdose, breathing slows or stops. The emergency is that the person is not breathing normally.

Fentanyl can be present in drugs without someone knowing. Anyone who uses pills or powders not obtained directly from a pharmacy may be at risk for an opioid overdose.

Don't assume who can or cannot have an opioid overdose.

Naloxone (Narcan®)

Naloxone is a safe medicine that can reverse an opioid overdose. It works only on opioids, such as heroin, fentanyl, and prescription painkillers.

If you are not sure opioids are involved, give naloxone anyway. It will not harm someone who does not have opioids in their body.

Naloxone takes 2–5 minutes to start working and may take more than one dose. It works for 30–90 minutes and may cause withdrawal symptoms until it wears off. Using more drugs is unlikely to reduce withdrawal and raises the risk of another overdose.

Tell others where you keep your naloxone and how to use it.



Signs of an opioid overdose

- They are not breathing, breathing very slowly, or making snoring or gurgling sounds.
- They are not waking up.
- They have signs of blue, gray, or white lips or fingernails.

Before you give naloxone

- Try to wake them up.
- Call their name, tap or shake their shoulder, and check whether they are breathing normally.
- If they do not wake up and are not breathing normally, it is an emergency.



How to respond to an overdose

SUPPORT: CALL 911



1. **Call 911 for medical help.** Tell them someone is not breathing.



2. **Give naloxone: peel, place, press.** Do not test device. Each device can only be used once. No assembly needed. Spray in one nostril by pushing plunger. If they are still not breathing normally after 2–3 minutes, give a new dose.



3. **Give rescue breaths.** Tilt their head back and lift their chin. Give one breath every 5 seconds. Watch for their chest to rise.



4. **Put them in the recovery position.** Put the person on their side to prevent choking. Stay with them until medical help arrives.