

Opioid Overdose Prevention

What is an Opioid?

- An opioid is a strong medicine that works on certain areas of the brain to reduce pain.
- These medicines can have serious side effects if used incorrectly.

Risk Factors for Opioid Overdose

- Mixing opioids with certain other medicines, illegal drugs, or with alcohol
- Taking opioids after a period of not being on them (recent release from prison/jail, discharge from an opioid “detox” program)
- Taking an opioid called methadone
- Taking high doses of opioids
- Previous opioid overdose
- Having kidney, liver, or breathing problems

Signs of an Opioid Overdose

- Slow or shallow breathing
- Blue or gray lips and fingernails
- Pale and/or moist skin
- Unable to wake up or respond

Please visit
www.naloxonesaves.org to
confidentially tell us about your
experience using naloxone.

How Can I Be Prepared for an Opioid Overdose?

Just like homes have a fire extinguisher in case of fire, people can carry **naloxone** in case of an opioid overdose. Naloxone is a medicine that can be given by a family member, friend, or caregiver and can stop the effects of opioids for a short time (30-90 minutes). Within 2 to 5 minutes, it will help you to start breathing again until an ambulance can get to you. Naloxone is easy and safe to use; it can be given by shot into a muscle or by spraying into the nose.

Pick someone close to you who could give you naloxone if you were having an opioid overdose. We call this person your **Rescue Person**. It is best to pick someone who lives with you or sees you often.

911 Good Samaritan/Naloxone Access Law

This law in North Carolina protects people who ask for help from 911, the police, or E.M.S. because they or another person is having a drug overdose. The law in North Carolina also protects people who give naloxone to someone who is having an overdose. Reading information on how to give naloxone (like the information in this sheet) is one way for them to show that they are using reasonable care.

To find mental health and substance abuse services in your community, visit
<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/providers/lme-mco-directory> or <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>.

To find crisis services in your community, visit <http://crisissolutionsnc.org/>.

Intramuscular Naloxone Patient Information Sheet

Uses: Naloxone is used to treat an opioid overdose. It works by reversing the effects of opioids.

Tell family and friends where naloxone is stored and how to use it in case of an overdose. It is important to call 911, because naloxone can begin to wear off between 30 to 90 minutes after it is given.

If you suspect someone is suffering from an opioid overdose:

Step 1. Call 911.

Step 2. Follow the 911 dispatcher's instructions or perform rescue breathing if comfortable doing so.

Step 3. Give naloxone (see diagram below).

Step 4. Give a second dose of naloxone in 2 to 5 minutes if there is no response to the first dose.

To watch videos on how to use intramuscular naloxone, please visit prescribetoprevent.org.

Rescue Breathing

Rescue breathing includes these key steps:

Step 1. Make sure nothing is in the individual's mouth.

Step 2. Tilt the head back, lift chin, and pinch nose shut.

Step 3. Give one slow breath every 5 seconds; chest should rise.

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How to Use Intramuscular Naloxone



1 Remove cap from naloxone vial and uncover the needle



2 Insert needle through rubber plug with vial upside down
Pull back on plunger and take up 1 mL



3 Inject 1 mL of naloxone at a 90 degree angle into a large muscle (upper arm/thigh, outer buttocks)

Images in Public Domain. San Francisco Department of Public Health. Naloxone for opioid safety: a provider's guide to prescribing naloxone to patients who use opioids. January 2015.

Possible side effects

A person may be anxious, sweaty, shaky, nauseous, or vomit when he or she goes through withdrawal from the opiate. If you notice other effects not listed, contact your doctor or pharmacist.