

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AN ACCIDENTAL OVERDOSE

ACCIDENTAL OVERDOSE CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE TAKING AN OPIOID, BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE FATAL.

If you know someone taking opioids, with or without a prescription, have a safety plan to avoid accidental overdose. A safety plan could save their life. This plan can include the following steps:

- Store all opioids in a safe and secure location away from children and pets
- Recognize an overdose (www.cdc.gov/opioids/overdoseprevention/index.html) emergency when it is happening
- Know where to get and how to use naloxone
- Learn rescue breathing techniques (www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr/performing-cpr/cpr-steps)
- Find treatment resources (<https://www.thedoctorway.nh.gov/home>)

Overdose happens when too much of the substance overwhelms the brain and interrupts the body's natural drive to breath. This can be very dangerous, even fatal.

Call 911 if you think someone is having an overdose emergency. If they have stopped breathing, every second counts.

YOU CAN HELP¹ PREVENT AN OVERDOSE:

- Call 911 immediately
- Give the person naloxone - a life-saving drug that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose, restoring breathing in minutes
- Keep the person awake and breathing
- Turn the person on their side to avoid choking
- Stay with them until emergency staff arrive

FACTORS THAT INCREASE A PERSON'S RISK OF OVERDOSE:

- Using opioids with alcohol
- Taking high daily doses of prescription opioids over a period of time
- Taking more of an opioid than prescribed
- Taking illegal opioids like heroin or fentanyl
- Certain medical conditions like sleep apnea or reduced kidney or liver function
- Age greater than 65 years old

NALOXONE REVERSES OPIOID OVERDOSE IN MINUTES

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE²

Signs a person is high from using an opioid:	Signs of a person having an overdose:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relaxed or limp muscles• Slurred or slow speech• Nodding off or falling asleep• Small or dilated pupils• Scratching at dry skin• Responds to yelling or loud noises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very slow, shallow, and irregular breathing or not breathing• Choking or gurgling sounds (death rattle)• Loss of consciousness, heavy nodding• Very pale or bluish skin, lips or fingernails• Awake but cannot talk or respond• Unresponsive to outside stimulus• Vomiting• Slow, erratic pulse or heartbeat

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMHSA Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 18-4742. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2018.

² Accessed August 8, 2021: Recognizing and Responding to Opioid Overdose, American Psychological Association.

³ Accessed August 8, 2021: Recognizing and Responding to Opioid Overdose, American Psychological Association.

NALOXONE (NARCAN™ ENVISIO™) FOR OVERDOSE³

Naloxone is a medication that reverses opioid overdose. During an overdose, the opioid depresses the respiratory system causing the person to stop breathing, which is what can make an overdose fatal.

If opioids are present, the overdose is quickly reversed by giving Naloxone. The person may experience opioid withdrawal signs and symptoms, but it would not be life threatening.

Naloxone usually wears off before the prescription opioid or heroin. Do not leave the person alone. This is especially important for someone who has overdosed on a longer acting opioid. In this case, it may be necessary for an intravenous continuous infusion of naloxone to be given in a hospital setting. This is why it is important to call 911.

Naloxone has no abuse potential; people cannot get high on naloxone.

Naloxone has NO effect if opioids are not present.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

The Partnership @drugfreeNH

drugfreenh.org: A safe place to gather and learn about local strategies and activities to prevent substance misuse.

Never Use Alone

Neverusealone.com or call 1-800-484-3731: To talk with a lifesaving point of contact while using substances, call Never Use Alone. No judgment, no shaming and no preaching.

The Doorway

thedoorway.nh.gov or call 2-1-1 (or 1-866-444-4211): A statewide service that supports any NH resident, of any age, with a substance or alcohol concern or issue including access to free naloxone.

NH Alcohol and Drug Treatment Locator

nhtreatment.org: A searchable database with treatment agencies and individual practitioners offering substance use disorder services.

2-1-1 NH

211nh.org: A comprehensive source of information about local resources and services to help you take care of yourself.

Get Naloxone Now

getnaloxonenow.org: Get free online resources and training to respond effectively to an opioid overdose emergency.

Reverse the Silence

reversesilence.org: A public awareness campaign with resources about opioid overdose preparedness and prevention.



Extension



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