

Opioid Overdose Prevention & Directions for Naloxone Use

Anyone who uses opioids can overdose and should carry naloxone

Opioids and Opioid Overdose

Opioids include some prescription pain medications, heroin, and fentanyl. Opioids can cause a person's breathing to slow down or stop. If someone takes more opioids than their body can handle, they can lose consciousness, stop breathing, and die. This is called an opioid overdose. An overdose can happen at once or over time.



Opioid Overdose Risks

- **Restarting opioid use after a break or change in type/dose.** This includes after leaving jail or prison, some types of drug treatment, and hospital admissions. *Tolerance can decrease quickly, even in a matter of days.*
- **Mixing opioids with other sedating substances** such as *alcohol, sleep aids, or benzodiazepines* ("benzos" like Valium and Xanax). Use one drug at a time or use less of each drug. Start low and go slow.
- **Taking prescription pain medication in higher doses and/or more often than prescribed**
- **Taking someone else's pain medication**
- **Using heroin or any drug not obtained from a pharmacy or cannabis dispensary,** due to unknown purity or origin
- **Heart, kidney, or lung disease,** which may affect the body's ability to fight back against an overdose
- **Having overdosed in the past**
- **Using alone:** you can't give yourself naloxone during an overdose. Try to use with a friend or around other people.



Signs of Opioid Overdose

- Slow or no breathing, they may look like they are sleeping
- Gurgling, gasping, or snoring
- Pale, gray, or blue fingernails or lips
- Ashen, white lips on a person of color
- Cool, clammy skin
- Unresponsive to external stimuli

If the person shows signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose, give naloxone even if you don't know what substance the person took.

Naloxone is a safe medication that can **temporarily** stop the effects of opioids and help a person start breathing again.

Naloxone only works on opioids and will have no effect on someone who has taken a different substance.

In Washington State, anyone can obtain naloxone at retail pharmacies, even if you don't have a prescription from a doctor. You can use the WA State Standing Order to dispense naloxone in lieu of a prescription from a primary care provider.

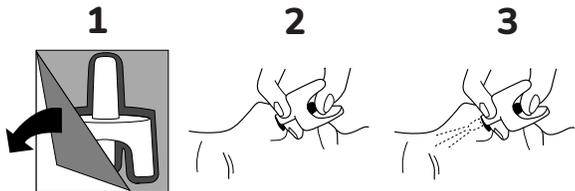
If you take anything not prescribed to you or obtained from a pharmacy or purchased at a cannabis dispensary:

Assume that what you're taking likely has fentanyl in it, which may significantly increase opioid overdose risks.

This is not a substitute for more complete overdose response training from a medical provider or health educator. Some content in this publication is adapted from WA Department of Health and ADAI. Naloxone nasal spray instructions are adapted from Adapt Pharma/Emergent BioSolutions.

How to use Naloxone

Nasal spray — needs no assembly. Do not test the device. Each device only works once. You may need both devices.

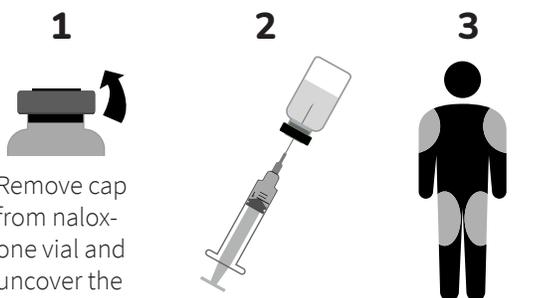


1
Peel back the package to remove the device.

2
Place and hold the tip of the nozzle in either nostril.

3
Press the plunger firmly to release the dose into nose.

Injectable — This requires assembly.



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 into an upper arm or thigh muscle.

Rescue Breathing

1. Lay the person flat on their back.
2. Gently tilt their head. Pinch their nose.
3. Give 2 quick breaths into their mouth. The chest (not stomach) should rise.
4. Give 1 slow breath every 5 seconds until they start breathing or wake up.



Responding to an Opioid Overdose:

During an opioid overdose, breathing can stop in a matter of minutes. Knowing the steps to act **FAST** and increase oxygen could help save a life.

1. Check for a response

Shake them and call their name, rub your knuckles hard over their chest bone — perform the sternum rub for 10 seconds as hard as possible.

2. Call 9-11

Tell the operator that someone isn't breathing and your exact location. You do not have to say anything about drugs or medicines at the scene. The WA State Good Samaritan Law offers protections when you call 9-1-1 for an overdose (RCW 69.50.315).

3. Give naloxone

4. Start rescue breathing

5. Repeat steps 3 & 4 if no response

6. You may need to give a second dose if they don't respond after 3 minutes

7. Stay with them until help arrives

Wait with them if possible until help arrives. If you can't wait, roll them into the recovery position in a safe place where they can be found.

If the person starts breathing, but they do not wake up, roll them on their side in the recovery position.

A person who received naloxone might be agitated, in pain, or experiencing withdrawal symptoms. Keep them from using drugs. Remember, naloxone wears off in 30-90 minutes, after which they could overdose again.



Watch a training video on overdose reversal

<https://vimeo.com/357020563> or stopoverdose.org/section/take-the-online-training/



Share this resource with a friend or family member

Take a picture with your cell phone, keep a quick sheet with the naloxone, and learn more at stopoverdose.org or bit.ly/naloxoneinstructions.