

Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education— Patient Handout

What are opioids?

Opioids are a class of drugs including heroin and prescription pain medications including:

Hydrocodone □ Oxycodone □ Fentanyl □ Morphine □ Codeine □ Methadone □ Buprenorphine

What is an opioid overdose?

Opioids can cause a person's **breathing to slow down or stop**— this is considered an overdose.

Who is at risk of an overdose?

Persons:

- Leaving emergency care for overdoses
- Lost tolerance— due to detox, incarceration, abstinence based treatment
- Enrolled in treatment programs
- In active drug use

What is naloxone?

Naloxone temporarily **blocks the effects** of opioids, and can reverse overdose.

- Naloxone only works if **opioids** are in the body, it has no effect on alcohol or other drugs □ It can take **1-5 minutes** to start working and may require more than one dose.
- Effects can last **30-90 minutes**, this varies per person
- Naloxone may cause an opioid dependent person to go into **withdrawal** (e.g. nausea, vomiting, agitation, muscle aches). These symptoms will go away as the naloxone wears off.

What does an overdose look like?

- A person is **unresponsive** (they won't wake up even if you yell or shake them)
- Give the person a sternal rub—rake your knuckles up and down on the front of the rib cage in the middle of their chest.
- Slow or **no breathing**
- Lips and/or fingernails turn blue, pale, or gray

What to do in case of an overdose?

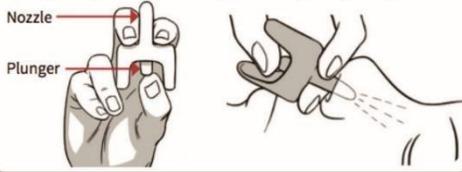
1. **Check for Responsiveness.**
2. **Call 911** Follow dispatcher instructions.
3. **Give 2 Rescue Breaths.** *for a few quick breaths if the person is not breathing.*
4. **Give naloxone** See reverse for instructions. If no reaction after 3 minutes, give second dose.
5. **Give rescue breaths or CPR** (if you know how or are instructed to by 911) until the person responds. *Rescue breathing: Tilt head back. Pinch nose. Give 1 breath every 5 seconds, repeat.*
6. **After care** Stay with the person as long as you can or until help arrives. Make sure the person **doesn't take more opioids**. If you must leave the person, place them on their side in recovery position.

If you don't have naloxone; call for help and give rescue breaths.

Administering Naloxone:

Nasal spray

This nasal spray needs no assembly and can be sprayed up one nostril by pushing the plunger.



Nasal spray with assembly

This requires assembly. Follow the instructions below.

- 1** Take off yellow caps.
- 2** Screw on white cone.
- 3** Take purple cap off capsule of naloxone.
- 4** Gently screw capsule of naloxone into barrel of syringe.
- 5** Insert white cone into nostril; give a short, strong push on end of capsule to spray naloxone into nose: **ONE HALF OF THE CAPSULE INTO EACH NOSTRIL.**
Push to spray.
- 6** If no reaction in 3 minutes, give second dose.

Auto-injector

The naloxone auto-injector needs no assembly and can be injected into the outer thigh, even through clothing. It contains a speaker that provides step-by-step instructions.



Injectable naloxone

This requires assembly. Follow the instructions below.

- 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.
fill to 1 ml
- 3** Inject 1 ml of naloxone into an upper arm or thigh muscle.
- 4** If no reaction in 3 minutes, give second dose.

“Good Samaritan Law”

Allows a person to assert an affirmative defense in court against certain charges, including possession (not distribution) of drugs or paraphernalia, intoxication and unlawful purchase, possession or consumption of alcohol.

You can still be charged and arrested with these crimes, but if you seek medical attention for the person overdosing and (a) remain at the scene or with the person until law enforcement arrives and (b) identify yourself to the responding law-enforcement officer you can assert an affirmative (a stronger) defense in court.

Reduce Risk

Changes in tolerance (how much your body can handle) use less after periods of abstinence

Mixing other drugs such as alcohol, benzos or cocaine—with opioids can increase risk of overdose

Taking opioids alone increases the chance that if something happens, you will not get help.

For more information on Opioid Overdose Prevention information, please visit:

<http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/behavioral-health/substance-abuse-services/revive>

or

<https://harmreduction.org/issues/overdose-prevention/>

For information on treatment options in Virginia, please visit:

<http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/developmental-services/substance-abuse-services>

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OPIOID OVERDOSE AND NALOXONE EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA