Naloxone for Opioid Overdose

An opioid overdose can kill. Naloxone (Narcan) is a medicine given to reverse an opioid overdose. Opioids have many names, and can include: hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, Norco), oxycodone (Oxycontin, Percocet), tramadol, morphine, methadone, codeine, (Tylenol #3), oxymorphone, fentanyl (Duragesic), buprenorphine (Subutex), heroin, pink

Naloxone [nal-OX-ohn] can be given by any bystander. If you or someone you care for uses opioids, get naloxone. It could save a life.

Signs of an opioid overdose

- Doesn’t respond to their name or to painful touch
- No breathing or very slow breathing
- Lips or fingernails are blue or purple
- Pupils are small

Not sure if it’s an overdose? Give naloxone anyway. Naloxone is safe for all—including children, pregnant women, and pets.

What to do now

- Get naloxone. You can get it at an Intermountain Healthcare pharmacy and some others.
- Read the instructions so you will know how to give it.
- Share the instructions with people close to you. Show them where you will keep the naloxone.

What to do when you think someone is having an overdose

1. Call 911. Try to wake the person by yelling, rubbing knuckles on their chest, or pinching them.

2. Do rescue breathing. The 911 dispatcher will help. If you can’t do this, go to step 3.

3. Give naloxone. It can be given as a nose spray or as a shot. Follow the instructions on the package. If the person does not respond in 2 to 3 minutes, give a second dose.

4. Prevent choking. Roll the person on their side.

5. Don’t leave the person. Stay calm until help arrives.
What are opioids?
Opioids are powerful medicines that a healthcare provider can prescribe to help manage severe pain. Opioids are also sold illegally on the street. Other names for opioids are opiates or narcotics.

How do I prevent an overdose?

Prevent an overdose in yourself:
• Only take the smallest amount of medicine needed to control your pain. If the amount prescribed is not enough, contact your doctor.
• Never take recreational drugs, or any prescription medicine that was not prescribed for you. You could have a reaction that could kill you.
• Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if it’s safe to take opioids with your other medicines.

Prevent an overdose in others:
• Never share pain medicine with anyone, even if that person has pain. Sharing opioid medicine is not only dangerous — it’s illegal.
• Lock up your medicine where it’s safe. Don’t keep it in places where anyone can find it. Make sure children and pets can’t get to it.
• Take any leftover medicine to a drug collection site, such as an Intermountain Healthcare Community Pharmacy. You can also find drop-off sites at useonlyasdirected.org. Unused pills can tempt others, which can lead to misuse.

Note: Naloxone will only reverse an opioid overdose. It will not reverse an overdose of alcohol, meth, cocaine, or anything else.

Who is at risk for overdose or death?
People most at risk for overdose or death are those who take:
• High doses of opioid medicine
• Methadone, long-acting opioids, opioids for chronic pain management, or take several different opioids on a rotating schedule
• More than one prescription opioid medicine, or mix opioids with alcohol, anti-anxiety medicines, or antidepressants
• More opioids than prescribed or use many different pharmacies to fill their prescriptions
• Opioids for non-medical reasons

Or those who:
• Use heroin or other street drugs
• Have overdosed on opioids before
• Use prescription opioid medicines and:
  – Smoke or have breathing problems
  – Have obstructive sleep apnea
  – Have kidney, heart, or liver disease
  – Do not live close to a hospital
  – Are over 65
  – Have dementia or Alzheimer’s disease

Where can I get help?
If you or someone you know needs help with treatment, addiction, or other local services:
• Call 211, or
• Visit findtreatment.samhsa.gov