What is an opioid overdose?

Opioids can cause bad reactions that make your breathing slow or even stop. This can happen if your body can’t handle the opioids that you take that day.

In case of overdose:

1. **Sternum rub**
   If the victim isn't breathing, is blue in the face or non-responsive, move your knuckles up and down the chest over the sternum with a lot of pressure.

2. **Call 911 and give naloxone**
   If no reaction in three minutes give second naloxone dose.

3. **Do rescue breathing or chest compressions**
   Follow 911 dispatcher instructions.

4. **Recovery position**
   If you need to leave the victim, place him/her on his/her side (recovery position) to prevent the person from choking on his/her vomit.

5. **After naloxone**
   Stay with person for at least three hours or until help arrives. Report naloxone use.

How to identify an opioid overdose:

Look for these common signs:

- The person won’t wake up, even if you shake him or her or say his or her name
- Breathing slows or even stops
- Lips and fingernails turn blue or gray
- Skin gets pale, clammy

TO AVOID AN ACCIDENTAL OPIOID OVERDOSE:

- Try not to mix your opioids with alcohol, benzodiazepines (Xanax, Ativan, Klonopin, Valium) or medicines that make you sleepy.
- Be extra careful if you miss or change doses, feel ill or start new medications.

Read more about common opioids* at [www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose).

*Heroin is also an opioid.

For patient education, videos and additional materials, please visit [https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/patients/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/patients/index.html).

Opioid safety and how to use naloxone

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS

What is naloxone? It is a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose.
Now that you have naloxone...

Tell someone where it is and how to use it.

How to give naloxone:*

*There are multiple ways to give naloxone. Call 911, then follow the instructions for the type you have.

Intranasal (FDA-Approved)

1. Peel back the package to remove the device.
2. Place the tip of the nozzle in either nostril until your fingers touch the bottom of the patient’s nose.
3. Press the plunger firmly to release the dose into the patient’s nose.
4. If no reaction after three minutes, give an additional dose using a new device in the alternate nostril.

Auto-injector (FDA-Approved)

Call 911. The naloxone auto-injector is FDA-approved for use by anyone in the community. It contains a speaker that provides instructions to inject naloxone into the outer thigh, through clothing if needed.

*There are multiple ways to give naloxone. Call 911, then follow the instructions for the type you have.

The person receiving naloxone must receive medical treatment.

Injectable 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 into an upper arm or thigh muscle.
4. If no reaction in 3 minutes, give second dose.

Intranasal (Off-Label)

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.
6. Push to spray.

If there is no reaction in 3 minutes, give second dose.