

OPIOIDS AND OVERDOSES: What You Need to Know

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU THINK SOMEONE MIGHT BE OVERDOSING:

The medication used to reverse an opioid overdose is nasal spray called **Narcan** or **Naloxone**. It can **prevent brain injury**. It can also **save a life**. It is **very safe**.



- Know where the Narcan is located at your office or facility. If you see someone showing signs of overdose, get the Narcan ready or notify someone who can.
- Each nasal Narcan spray is a single dose. The round white part goes in the nose as far as you can insert it. Then push the red plunger as hard as possible to force out the spray.
- Call 911 at the same time you give the Narcan. You may not have enough Narcan to wake the person up. It can also wear off.
- If the person does not wake up and start breathing normally after 2 minutes, give another dose in the opposite nostril. There is no maximum dose of Narcan. It is an extremely safe medication.
- When Narcan works, sometimes the person may be unhappy or angry when they wake up. This is OK. They get to live another day. The emergency room team will help the person recover safely.

What are the types of opioids?

- Opioids include heroin and prescription pain pills such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, Vicodin, Percocet, morphine, and dilaudid. Some street names include Blues, Oxies, and Xanax or Xanies (Zanies).
- Fentanyl and Carfentanil are also opioids. They are the most dangerous street drugs today. They are manufactured to be stronger and more lethal than all other drugs combined.
 - For example, fentanyl is 100 times stronger than morphine. It only takes microscopic amounts to kill. This is like a couple of grains of salt.
- Fentanyl, carfentanil, and other synthetic opioids are inexpensive to make and often mixed into many other drugs. This is called **lacing**. It can be impossible to tell if something is laced until it is too late.
- People use opioids several different ways. They can take pills, drink Purple Drank or other liquids, or smoke them from pipes or foil. Opioids can also be injected into the veins or muscles.

There are three ways to obtain naloxone in Washington State:

- **Pharmacy with prescription:** Any prescriber can write a prescription for naloxone and any pharmacy can fill that prescription.
- **Pharmacy without prescription:** Under Washington's Statewide Standing Order, anyone can obtain naloxone directly from any pharmacy that carries it. A customer can get naloxone directly from a pharmacist without first seeing a provider.
- **Community programs:** Many harm reduction syringe service programs and other community programs distribute naloxone, although some only give naloxone for clients. Contact the program to find out. Clients of DCYF can request support from assigned caseworker to obtain naloxone.

Can I be punished if I call 911?

- No! A law called the **Good Samaritan Law** in Washington State protects people attempting to help someone having a medical emergency. If a friend, family, co-worker, or friend is overdosing, call 911.
- You cannot be sued or face drug possession charges if you are attempting to help. The victim also cannot be charged.

Final thoughts:

- Most people overdose by accident, and there are a lot of counterfeit (fake) medications out there. What is in them changes all the time.
- Just because someone took a Zanie bar before without overdosing doesn't mean it won't be laced with Fentanyl or Carfentanil and cause an overdose next time.
- If you didn't get the pill from a pharmacist or your doctor's office, do not take it. Your life might depend on it!

