

Reverse an Overdose: Naloxone (NARCAN)

What is Naloxone?

Naloxone (brand name Narcan or EVIZO) is a legal and FDA approved antidote that reverses an opioid overdose. It can be injected into a muscle or sprayed into the nose and works by neutralizing the opioids in the body's system to help the person breathe again. It doesn't have to be administered by a medical professional and even if the individual was not experiencing a medical emergency due to opioid use, it will not cause any harm if administered.

People do not need a prescription to buy Naloxone. The 4-milligram nasal spray dose can be bought at drug stores, convenience stores and online.

People who are concerned about the risk of an opioid overdose – either their own risk or someone else's – may want to consider having Naloxone on hand.

Signs and symptoms of an Opioid Overdose:

- Slow or shallow breathing
- Small, constricted pinpoint pupils
- Gasping noises while sleeping or snoring in an unusual way (also known as the 'death rattle')
- Skin that is pale, blue, or cold
- A slow heartbeat
- Limp body
- Loss of consciousness

What to do if you think someone is overdosing:

- Call 911 immediately
- Administer Naloxone
- Try to keep the person awake and breathing
- Initiate CPR if necessary
- Lay the person on their side to prevent choking (recovery position)
- Stay with the person until emergency responders arrive

Administering intranasal Naloxone (Narcan):

1. Remove cap from the nasal syringe. There are usually two – one at each end of the syringe.
 - A syringe is not a needle, it's a plastic device that holds the needle – this is what the Narcan will screw onto.
2. The tube of Narcan may have a red cap. Remove the red cap and discard it.
3. Insert the nasal atomizer (cone-shaped applicator) onto the syringe. Screw the Narcan container onto the barrel of the syringe.
 - **Don't test the spray.** It is a single-use and cannot be reused.
4. Administer the Narcan, half in each nostril. Make sure victim is lying on their back.
 - Some nasal sprays come in pre-assembled packages. They contain two needle-free devices, one to use in each nostril.

For more information, call the South Dakota Resource Hotline 1-800-920-4343, visit getnaloxonenow.org, or search the Helpline Center Resource Database:

- helplinecenter.org/2-1-1
 - Enter your Zip Code
 - Select Substance Use (or Addictions) category

Sources:

- Drugs.com <https://www.drugs.com/mtr/narcan-nasal.html>
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/prevention/>
- SAMHSA <https://www.samhsa.gov/medications-substance-use-disorders/medications-counseling-related-conditions>

Disclaimer: This HelpSheet is developed by the Helpline Center for informational purposes only. HelpSheets provide a brief overview of the designated topic. For more information, call 211 or text your zip code to 898211.

Updated July 2024