

Opioid Overdose Overview Fact Sheet for Patients

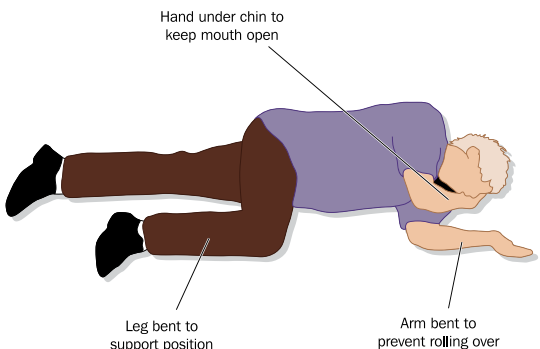
Introduction

Opioids can cause a bad and potentially fatal reaction (overdose) that makes your breathing slow or even stop, which can be fatal. Opioids include prescriptions such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, codeine, and hydromorphone. Other opioids are heroin and fentanyl, which can be obtained illicitly or may contaminate street drugs like cocaine, methamphetamine, or counterfeit pills.

How to Avoid an Accidental Opioid Overdose

- Only take medicine prescribed to you and don't take more than prescribed.
- Don't mix opioids with alcohol, benzodiazepines (Xanax, Ativan, Klonopin, Valium), or medicines that make you sleepy.
- Don't use opioids while alone. If you do use alone, call the Never Use Alone hotline at (877) 696-1996 prior to using.
- Don't use opioids from an unknown source.
- If you haven't taken opioids for some time, start with a very small "tester dose." It is likely that you won't need to take as much as before.
- Store your opioids in a secure place and dispose of unused medications to minimize risk of others overdosing.
- Have naloxone on hand and teach your family and friends how to respond to an overdose.

How to Respond to an Opioid Overdose

A Patient-Centered Guide to Managing an Opioid Overdose	
STEP 1 Assess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to arouse the person by loudly calling their name and giving them a firm shake. If they don't wake up, vigorously rub your knuckles into the sternum (the breastbone in the middle of the chest) or pinch the ear lobes to wake them up. • Look for the classic signs of an opioid overdose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Slow breathing – Not awakening – Very small pupils • If they remain unresponsive, move on to Step 2.
STEP 2 Call 911	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opioid overdoses need immediate medical attention. • Call 911 right away (say "someone is unresponsive and not breathing"; give clear address and location).
STEP 3 Administer naloxone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer a dose of naloxone as early as possible. • If the person doesn't respond within two to three minutes, give a second dose of naloxone.
STEP 4 Support breathing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the person doesn't have a pulse, CPR will be needed. • If the person isn't breathing but still has a pulse, perform rescue breathing by giving one breath every five seconds. • Do not leave the person alone. Wait for emergency responders to arrive; while waiting, follow their instructions, which may include placing the person into the recovery position:  <p>Hand under chin to keep mouth open</p> <p>Leg bent to support position</p> <p>Arm bent to prevent rolling over</p>
STEP 5 Monitor response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because naloxone only lasts for a short time, overdose symptoms may return. • Ensure the person does not use more opioids after naloxone revival. They may be in withdrawal, but naloxone will prevent opioids from relieving symptoms and they will risk overdosing again once naloxone is eliminated from their body. • It is critical that the person be transferred to the emergency department, even if there is a full revival.