

Reversing an Opioid Overdose

What is an Opioid Overdose?

- ▶ Body is Overwhelmed by Opioids
- ▶ Body Stops Breathing Automatically
- ▶ Lack of Oxygen Leads to Organ Shutdown

People can overdose on lots of things, like insulin and tylenol. Opioid overdoses happen when there is a toxic amount of opioids or a combination of opioids and other drugs present in the body.

1

Evaluate - are they overdosing?

Call someone's name, yell, give them a light shake. Say "I am going to give you Narcan." If they are still not responsive, the best physical stimulation to determine if someone can be woken up is a sternum rub (rubbing your knuckles on their chest bone for about 10 seconds).

2

Support Breathing

It is easiest to support breathing when someone is lying down. Once on their back, check to see if there is anything in their mouth and then lift their chin to open the airways. If the person is not breathing steadily and deeply on their own, administer two rescue breaths. Rescue breathing can be performed throughout the remainder of this process when possible.

Open airways by lifting chin slightly.



Rescue Breathing:
Tilt their neck, pinch the nose
Pull-in your air, seal your mouth on theirs.
Breathe all of your air into them. Repeat every 5 seconds.

3

Administer Naloxone

It can take 2-3 minutes for a dose of naloxone to kick in, so while you wait you should continue rescue breathing and/or call 911.

An overdose might require more than one dose. Different methods of administering naloxone are also vastly different amounts (.4 vs. 4mg).

Continue administering naloxone every 2-3 minutes as needed (nasal spray or I.M. injection).

4

Call 911

Many people who use drugs are (justifiably) afraid to call 911 because of poor past experiences with law enforcement and first responders at the scene of an overdose. Be thoughtful about informing people in the surrounding area and, if they wake up, the person who overdosed, that the police and fire fighters might be arriving shortly.

5

Monitor and Repeat

Continue rescue breathing and administering naloxone every 2-3 minutes

If you need to leave the person alone or if they start breathing regularly and are still unconscious, move them into the recovery pose.



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