

# Opioid Overdose

## Prevention, Response and Resources

### What is an Opioid?

Opioids include heroin and prescription pain medications such as:

Vicodin (hydrocodone)	Fentanyl
OxyContin (oxycodone)	Percocet
Dilaudid (hydromorphone)	Methadone
MS Contin (morphine)	...and others

### Opioid Overdose

- Anyone who uses opioids can overdose.
- Overdose occurs if people need help breathing or waking up after taking opioids.
- An overdose does not necessarily cause death – some people don't even realize that they have overdosed.
- Overdose can take minutes or even hours to occur.

### Factors that Increase Overdose Risk

- **Restarting opioids after a break** (incarceration, treatment, hospitalization). Tolerance drops within a few days.
- **Using opioids with alcohol or sedating drugs** like sleep aids and benzodiazepines ("benzos" like Valium and Xanax).
- Taking **prescription pain medicine more often** or in **higher doses** than prescribed.
- **Any heroin use** due to its wide range of purity.
- **Taking someone else's pain medication.**
- **Using long-acting opioids** (like methadone) or powerful opioids (like fentanyl).
- Medical problems such as **heart, lung or kidney disease.**
- **Past overdose** increases the likelihood of future overdoses.

### Strategies to Reduce Overdose Risk

- **Do not use alone** (there is nobody to help if you do overdose).
- **Try a small test dose with new supply or after period of not using.**
- **The more you use at a time, the more likely you are to overdose. Use smaller quantities.**
- **Do not use opioids with alcohol or other drugs.**
- **Carry a Naloxone kit with you. Teach friends and family how to use Naloxone.**
- **Consider methadone or buprenorphine (Suboxone).**

### Overdose Prevention Resources:

- Connecticut Department of Public Health Overdose Prevention  
[www.tinyurl.com/CT-DPH-ODP](http://www.tinyurl.com/CT-DPH-ODP)
- SAMHSA Opioid Overdose Toolkit  
[www.tinyurl.com/SAMHSA-OD-kit](http://www.tinyurl.com/SAMHSA-OD-kit)

### Addiction Treatment Resources:

- Call 211 in CT for treatment referral or go to DHMAS website at  
[www.tinyurl.com/DHMAS-Reg2-Tx](http://www.tinyurl.com/DHMAS-Reg2-Tx)
- Suboxone/buprenorphine providers  
[www.tinyurl.com/locate-bup](http://www.tinyurl.com/locate-bup)
- Treatment services in the US  
[www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

*This brochure is adapted from the Center for Opioid Safety Education from [stopoverdose.org](http://stopoverdose.org). It is not a substitute for more complete overdose response training.*

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**If someone you know is taking prescription pain medication or using heroin...**

**would you know what to do if they accidentally overdosed?**

This information could help you save a life

# TAKING ACTION IN AN OPIOID OVERDOSE

## 1

Could this be an opioid overdose?



### Look and listen for:

- slow or no breathing
- gurgling, gasping or snoring
- clammy, cool skin
- blue lips or nails
- pill bottles, needles or alcohol

### Try to wake them up

- Shake them.  
Call their name.
- Rub your knuckles hard over their chest bone.



If they don't wake up,  
you need to act fast!

Learn more at [stopoverdose.org](http://stopoverdose.org)

## 2

### Call 911



- You don't need to say anything about drugs or medications.
- Just say where you are and that the person isn't breathing.

## 3

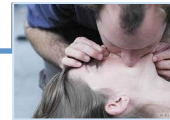
### Give naloxone and start rescue breathing



- Give **naloxone** if available.
- Start rescue breathing.
- If they don't respond in 3-5 minutes, give a second dose of naloxone. **Keep rescue breathing!**

### Rescue Breathing

- Tilt head back. Lift chin. Pinch Nose.
- Give 2 quick breaths. Chest should rise.
- Give 1 slow breath every 5 seconds.
- Repeat until help arrives.



## 4

### Stay with them



- Naloxone wears off in 30-90 minutes and overdose can happen again.
- **Stay until medical help arrives.**
- If you must leave, place in recovery position somewhere easy to find with door open.

Under the Good Samaritan Law:



You cannot be prosecuted for having a small amount of medication or drugs when you seek help in an overdose. The overdose victim is also protected. The law does not protect you or them from other crimes or warrants.

### Naloxone

- **Naloxone** (Narcan®) is a prescription medicine that can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose and help a person start breathing again.
- Its effects lasts 20 to 90 minutes.
- It can be given as an injection into a muscle or as an intranasal spray.
- It is easy and very safe to use.
- CT also allows 'third party prescribing, which means naloxone can be prescribed for you even if it is for use on a friend or family member.

### How can I get naloxone?

- All doctors and independent practitioners (PAs, APRNs, etc) are able to prescribe naloxone.
- Naloxone kits may be available at local drug treatment facilities, New Haven Needle Exchange, or in the Emergency Department.

A recent state law allows pharmacists to prescribe and dispense naloxone without a prescription from a doctor. Ask your local pharmacist if **pharmacist prescribed naloxone** is currently available.