

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources



Save a Life: How to Use Naloxone to Reverse an Opioid Overdose

Who can reverse an opioid overdose?

Anyone who wants to save a life.

What is an opioid?

Opioids are drugs that manage pain. They are sold as a prescription: morphine, codeine, hydrocodone, oxycodone and others, or they are sold on the street (illegally): heroin, non-prescription fentanyl, carfentanil, and others.

How can I tell if someone has overdosed on an opioid?

An opioid overdose is possible if the person:

1. Is unconscious and not responding to sounds, light shaking, or pain.
2. Not breathing enough or at all. They may have a bluish color to skin, lips, or fingertips. They may make gurgling sounds when they breathe.

What does naloxone do?

Naloxone is the antidote for an opioid overdose. It competes for the same part of the brain where the opioid works. Naloxone wins, and the opioid stops working for a period of time. This makes the person breathe well again.

Does naloxone wear off (stop working)?

Yes. Naloxone only works for 30 minutes to 2 hours. Once it wears off, the person may stop breathing again. Call 911 and make sure the person is not alone after an overdose.

Will the person wake up if I give naloxone?

Not always. As long as the person is breathing well again, the naloxone did its job. Other drugs or alcohol may keep the person unconscious.

You may return expired naloxone
and/or obtain refills from:

Jefferson County Health Department
1948 Wiltshire Rd, Ste.1
Kearneysville, WV 25430
(304) 728-8416



Naloxone Administration Check List

Signs of an opioid overdose (naloxone only works for an opioid overdose):

- Inability to wake the person up (does not respond to shouting or sternal rub).
- Not breathing or not breathing well - look for blue lips or fingertips.

If they do not respond and are not breathing well, or if you are unsure if they are breathing well enough, prepare to administer naloxone.

Steps to Administer Naloxone

- Place the person flat on their back and open the airway (lift chin up).
- Direct someone to **CALL 911** or do it yourself.
- Administer a dose of naloxone.
- If not breathing, there is **NO** harm in giving naloxone.
- If possible, rescue breathing should be done until the patient begins breathing again.
- If the person is still not breathing well after 3 minutes, repeat the dose.
- If the person starts to vomit, turn them onto their side so the vomit does not choke them.
- If the person starts to breathe or wake up, put the person in the recovery position (on his/her side) and move away to put some space between you. Waking up from an overdose can cause some people to get very agitated and confused. You may accidentally get hit if you are close.
- Stay with the person until emergency medical services arrive. Keep in mind, naloxone will wear off. The person should be watched for 3-4 hours to make sure they do not stop breathing again.

How to Administer Intranasal Naloxone

4mg/0.1 mL or 8mg/0.1 mL

Step 1. Open box to remove individually wrapped packages. Peel open package to remove the device.



Step 2. Place two fingers on top of the device (on each side of the nozzle).

Step 3. Place nozzle in either nostril until your fingers touch the bottom of the person's nose. Point nozzle towards the person's ear (away from the middle of the face).



Step 4. Press the plunger firmly to release the medication. Remove device from nostril after dose is given.

Step 5. If person is not breathing well after 3 minutes, repeat the dose (in the opposite nostril) with the other device in the box.

Provide the helpline phone number: **1-844-HELP4WV** (1-844-4357-498).

Report overdose to WV Poison Control even if 911 was called: **1-800-222-1222**.

Storage

Naloxone can only save a life if it is stored in a location that you can get to easily and quickly.

- Do not store where it would be exposed to extreme hot or cold (in a car).
- May store in medicine cabinet, first aid kit, etc.
- Consider carrying a kit with you (in a purse or backpack). WV State Code allows for anyone to carry naloxone with or without a prescription.
- Store away from children.

Side Effects

If the person is not breathing or not breathing well, the chance of saving their life is more important than possible side effects.

If the person receiving naloxone has been taking opioids for a long time, naloxone may cause the person to go into withdrawal. Side effects may include:

- Runny nose
- Sweating
- Fast heart rate or high blood pressure
- Shakes
- Nausea and vomiting
- Rapid return of pain

What Happens If You Do Not Call 911?

- You are **NOT** protected by the law if you do not call 911.
- If you give naloxone in good faith to someone you think is experiencing an opioid overdose **AND** you call 911, you are protected by the law.