

# What to do in case of an opioid overdose



Opioids can cause bad reactions that make your breathing slow or even stop. This can happen if your body can't handle the opioids that you take that day or if they are mixed with other drugs or alcohol.

## Identify an opioid overdose:

- No response when you yell the person's name or rub the middle of their chest with your knuckles.
- Slow, erratic breaths, or no pulse.
- Snoring or gurgling noises while asleep or nodding out.
- Lips and fingernails turn blue or gray.
- Skin gets pale and clammy.

## In case of overdose:

- **Don't run, call 911!** Iowa's Good Samaritan Law protects you if you witness a drug overdose.
- **Give naloxone (sometimes called Narcan).** If no reaction in 3 minutes, give a second naloxone dose.
- **Do rescue breathing or chest compressions.** Follow 911 dispatcher instructions.
- **After naloxone is given, stay with the person** for at least 3 hours or until help arrives.

## How to use naloxone nasal spray:

1. Peel back the package to remove the device.
2. Place the tip of the nozzle in either nostril until your fingers touch the bottom of the person's nose.
3. Press the plunger firmly to release the dose into the person's nose.
4. Repeat if there is no response after 3 minutes, give second dose in other nostril.

## Avoid an accidental opioid overdose:

- Do not mix your opioids with alcohol, benzodiazepine (Xanax, Ativan, Klonopin, Valium), or medicines that make you sleepy.
- Be careful if you miss or change doses, feel ill, or start new medications.

**Now that you know, be sure to tell someone else where your naloxone is and how to use it.**

## Get free naloxone nasal spray.

Naloxone is a medication designed to rapidly reverse an opioid overdose. Most large Iowa pharmacies provide free naloxone. Anyone who may be in a position to assist in the event of an opioid overdose is encouraged to receive naloxone education and have a supply on hand.

For more information visit [naloxoneiowa.org](http://naloxoneiowa.org)

