**Naloxone Quick Facts**

**What is naloxone?**
Naloxone is a prescription medicine that temporarily stops the effect of opioids. This helps a person start breathing again and wake up from an opioid overdose. Naloxone (the generic name) is also sold under the brand names *Narcan®* and *Evzio®*.

**Naloxone:**
- only works on opioids. It has no effect on someone who has not taken opioids.
- cannot be used to get high and is not addictive.
- has a long safety history. Adverse side effects are rare.
- can be easily and safely administered by laypersons.

In WA State, anyone who might have or witness an opioid overdose can legally possess and administer naloxone.

**How naloxone works**
Naloxone attaches to the same brain receptors as opioids, but more strongly. Naloxone kicks off the opioids and “takes over” the receptors. This restores breathing and consciousness in about 2-5 minutes. However, when the naloxone wears off in about 30-90 minutes, any opioids still in the brain can return to the receptors. The person may stop breathing again.

Naloxone will not reverse the effects of other drugs like cocaine, methamphetamine, alcohol, or benzodiazepines (e.g. Xanax®, Klonopin® and Valium®). But naloxone can still block the effect of opioids (and reverse the overdose) even if the person has also taken one or more of these other drugs.

When someone wakes up after naloxone, they may feel some symptoms of opioid withdrawal like pain, sweating, nausea, or vomiting. They may also feel confused, anxious or slightly agitated, but rarely combative or violent.

Naloxone is very safe and easy to use. Naloxone can be sprayed into the nose or injected into a thick muscle like the thigh or upper arm.

All of the naloxone products available are similarly effective against opioid overdose. A health care provider or pharmacist can help you select which product is best for you.

**Support for take-home naloxone**
A number of governmental and professional organizations have endorsed policies to expand opioid overdose education and availability of take-home naloxone:
- World Health Organization *Community Management of Opioid Overdose*, 2014
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *Expanding Naloxone Could Reduce Drug Overdose Deaths*, 2015

*The 2 injectable and 2 intranasal products currently available.*
There is a growing body of research evidence that shows overdose education and naloxone distribution:

**Are feasible:**
- Piper et al. Subst Use Misuse 2008: 43: 858-70
- Walley et al. JSAT 2013: 44: 241-7 (Methadone and detox programs)

**Are cost effective:**

**Improve knowledge and skills to prevent overdose deaths:**

**Reduce overdoses in communities:**
- Walley et al. BMJ 2013: 346: f174

**Do not increase drug use:**

**SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS:**

- Preventing fatal overdoses: a systematic review of the effectiveness of take-home naloxone European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, EMCDDA Papers, 2015.