

What is an opioid overdose?

- **Opioids include** heroin and prescription pain medications like:
Vicodin * OxyContin * Percocet * Dilaudid * Fentanyl * MS Contin * Methadone
- **Opioids slow down breathing.** In an overdose, your breathing slows down too much or stops completely. If the brain can't get enough oxygen you can die.
- **You can overdose minutes or even hours after you've used opioids.** You may start out just really sleepy. But eventually you might pass out and stop breathing.

What can cause an overdose?

Using after your tolerance has dropped (like after detox, hospital, jail, treatment).
Heroin strength varies. You can't tell how strong it is or what else is in it by how it looks.
Mixing opioids with benzos, alcohol, other opioids. Or even with methamphetamine or cocaine.
Using opioid pain meds more often or at a higher dose than prescribed for you.
Using someone else's opioid pain meds. They may be too strong for you.
Using alone. You're more likely to die if no one is there to help.
People who have overdosed in the past are more likely to overdose again!

What are signs of an overdose?

- won't wake up
- slow or no breathing
- pale, gray skin
- blue lips or fingertips
- snoring or gurgling sound

What should I do?

1. Try to wake them up. Shout their name, shake them. Rub your knuckles hard up and down their sternum/breastbone.

2. Call 911. Even if you have naloxone, you must call 911. There could be something else wrong or it could be too late for naloxone to work.

3. Give a single dose of naloxone. If someone is with you, they can call 911 and/or do rescue breathing while you get the naloxone.

4. Give rescue breaths. Naloxone can take 2-3 minutes to work so you need to breathe for the person:

- Tilt head back, lift chin, pinch nose.
- Give 1 full breath every 5 seconds. (not quick, not a hurricane). Their chest should rise and fall.

5. If they don't wake up in 2-3 minutes, give a second dose of naloxone.

6. Keep rescue breathing until the person wakes up or medical help arrives.

If the person wakes up, they won't realize they have overdosed. Calmly explain what happened. Stay with them until emergency medical help arrives.

Naloxone wears off in 30-90 minutes when they could slip back into overdose. Encourage the person to go to the hospital. They should NOT use more opioids right now!

If you are trying to help in an overdose, the **Good Samaritan Law** in WA State says that you and the victim **cannot** be charged with minor drug possession.
Don't be afraid to call 911!

Try to wake them up. Call 911. Give naloxone and rescue breaths.