

Clinical Technical Assistance: Naloxone

WHAT is Naloxone?

Naloxone is an opioid overdose-reversing medication that can be administered through a nasal spray or injection.

It is **not** treatment for opioid use disorder.



Nasal Spray: Evizo



Nasal Spray: Narcan

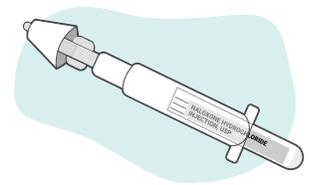
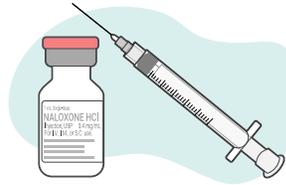


Image Credit: <https://egov.ct.gov/norasaves/#/how-to-give-naloxone>

WHEN should naloxone be used?

Naloxone should be administered when there is any potential for an opiate overdose. This is not limited to illicit opioids, such as heroin. Opioid overdoses can occur as a result of prescribed pain medications such as Percocet and Vicodin.

Signs of an Opioid Overdose

- pale, blue, clammy, or cold skin
- unresponsive to voice or touch - cannot be woken up
- slow, shallow breathing
- choking or gurgling sounds
- blue nails or lips
- small, constricted "pinpoint" pupils
- slow or stopped heartbeat
- dizziness or disorientation

WHO can administer naloxone and who should it be used for?

Anyone can carry and administer naloxone. Naloxone can be administered to anyone when there is concern of an opioid overdose.

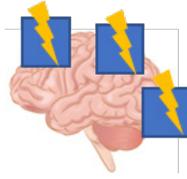


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HOW does naloxone work?

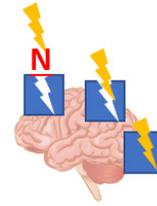


Due to a variety of factors (potency, amount, personal health, etc) the opioids attaching to the brain receptors cause an overdose



Naloxone pulls the opioids off the receptors and creates a barrier that lasts for 30-90 minutes.

Naloxone does NOT remove opioids from the body.



As the naloxone wears off, opioids remaining in the body can reconnect to the brain and **there IS a potential for a second overdose to occur.**

WHERE can I obtain naloxone?

There are a few ways to obtain naloxone, and **none** of them require you to be an individual who actively uses.

Pharmacies

Pennsylvania has a “standing prescription” for naloxone, meaning anyone can obtain naloxone from their local pharmacy without a direct prescription. Most insurance companies cover the cost of naloxone.



Health Departments and Single County Authorities (SCAs)

Contact your county health department or local SCA to ask about naloxone community distribution.



Pennsylvania Harm Reduction Coalition

Pennsylvania Harm Reduction Coalition offers mail-based naloxone distribution.

www.paharmreduction.org/naloxone



Frequently Asked Questions

Should I carry naloxone with me?

Yes! Carrying naloxone is not limited to individuals who actively use illicit opioids, such as heroin. If you have an opioid prescription in your home, consider also having naloxone available for emergencies. You can also consider carrying a naloxone kit in your purse or keeping it in your car – you never know when you’ll have the opportunity to save someone’s life!

What if I administer naloxone and the person doesn’t have opioids in their system?

It’s OK! According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), there is no harm in administering naloxone to someone who doesn’t have opioids in their system.

Frequently Asked Questions

What's it like for someone who overdosed to be revived with naloxone?

It is common for someone who has had their overdose reversed by naloxone to experience a surge of adrenaline. The individual may be disoriented as a result of the loss of consciousness and lack of oxygen to the brain. Additionally, the individual may have difficulty sitting still and controlling their movements. Finally, individuals who have been administered naloxone experience immediate withdrawal symptoms because of the removal of the opioids from the brain receptors.

Am I supporting the person's use by using naloxone? Doesn't naloxone just enable a person to keep using?

No! Administering naloxone to an individual who is experiencing an opioid overdose is saving their life, not enabling their potential illicit use. Remember, it's impossible for someone to pursue recovery and make positive changes if they die from a fatal overdose.

How long does naloxone last?

Naloxone is effective for 30-90 minutes post-administration. Most opioids remain effective longer than naloxone, which is why a second overdose can occur after naloxone is administered. Someone who is administered naloxone may want to use additional opioids to stop the withdrawal symptoms but doing so places them at greater risk of experiencing a second overdose as the original opioids have likely not all been processed through the body.

Am I legally allowed to administer naloxone?

Yes! Pennsylvania passed the Opioid Overdose Reversal Act 139 (David's Law) which provides criminal, civil and professional immunity when naloxone is administered, in good faith, to an individual experiencing an overdose. Learn more about David's Law by visiting OverdoseFreePA.

Are there any risks for someone whose overdose was reversed with naloxone?

The individual will experience immediately withdrawal, which is physically and emotionally overwhelming. Because the naloxone will wear off before the opioids in the body, it's important that the individual who was revived not seek and use additional opioids. It is possible for a second overdose to occur when the original opioids reconnect to the brain or if additional opioids are consumed.

David's Law also protects individuals revived with naloxone from being charged for drug possession or paraphernalia. Additionally, experiencing an opioid overdose is not a crime.

Why do some naloxone kits have two doses?

In some situations, a second dose of naloxone needs to be administered. In fact, sometimes more than two doses are needed.

Is there anything else I should do if I believe someone is experiencing an overdose?

Yes! Call 9-1-1!

Call 911 immediately if you believe someone is experiencing an overdose

Additional Resources:

Harm Reduction Coalition, Understanding Naloxone - <https://harmreduction.org/issues/overdose-prevention/overview/overdose-basics/understanding-naloxone/>

National Institute on Drug Abuse, Naloxone - <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/naloxone>

Pennsylvania Harm Reduction Coalition, Naloxone Distribution Program - <https://www.paharmreduction.org/naloxone>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Naloxone - <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/treatment/naloxone>

University of Pittsburgh, PERU, ACT 139 (David's Law) - http://www.overdosefreepa.pitt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Act139_TACTrainingHandout_20160707_v3-0.pdf