

# Naloxone use for an opioid overdose

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## What are opioids?

The doctor is giving you a prescription for an opioid to help treat your child's pain. Opioids are a type of medicine that:

- Help relieve moderate to severe pain.
- Work by blocking pain signals in the brain. This can help your child to feel more comfortable.

## What is naloxone?

Naloxone is a medicine that:

- Blocks opioid activity in the brain.
- Works very quickly to reverse opioid effects.

## Why should I keep naloxone on hand?

Opioids can place your child and others at risk if you take more than what is advised. Opioids can cause:

- Breathing to slow down and get shallow. This can lead to less oxygen for the brain, heart and other organs.
- Breathing to stop altogether in some cases.

Too much opioids can cause death, so overdose must be treated **right away**. Naloxone can be used to help treat overdose. It is very important to keep it on hand in case of emergency.

## Where can I find naloxone?

Your child's doctor can give you a prescription to fill at your local pharmacy. Naloxone is covered by most insurances, and copays vary. Talk with your insurance company if you have questions about what they cover.

## How will I know if someone needs naloxone?

Someone may need naloxone if you cannot wake them and/or they are breathing slowly or not at all, especially if they are known to have taken an opioid or narcotic. If this happens, tell someone to call 911 or call 911 on speakerphone while giving naloxone.

## How do I give naloxone?

Naloxone most often comes as a nasal spray. Some guidelines for giving naloxone include:

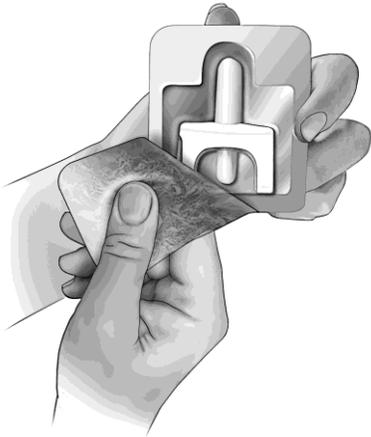
1. Peel open the medicine packaging.
2. Place the nozzle up into the person's nostril as far as you can.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

## Naloxone use for an opioid overdose, continued

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3. Push in the plunger with your thumb. **Be SURE to keep their head tilted back** so the medicine will not run out of the nose. It works by being absorbed by the blood vessels in the nasal tissue.
4. After you give it, turn the person on their side to help prevent choking.
5. If there is no response within 2 minutes, give another dose if you have it.
6. If there is still no response after 2 doses, start CPR as appropriate until EMS (emergency medical services) arrives.



**Peel**



**Place**



**Push**

### What should I expect after I give naloxone?

After you give naloxone, the person should become responsive and awaken within minutes. When responsive, their color and breathing should start getting better and they should be able to talk. If they remain sleepy but able to talk, you do not need to give a second dose of naloxone.

If they DO NOT become responsive within 2 minutes after the first dose:

- Use a new naloxone nasal spray to give a dose in their other nostril.
- You can give doses every 2 minutes, alternating nostrils, for as many doses as you have until the person becomes responsive or EMS arrives to take over their care.

If they DO become responsive:

- Turn them on their **LEFT** side in a recovery position.
- Watch them closely in case they need more naloxone. Overdose victims can slip back into an overdose 30 to 90 minutes after being reversed without taking more opioids or narcotics.
- Encourage them to accept EMS transport to the hospital.

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# Naloxone use for an opioid overdose, continued

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## What else can I expect?

When naloxone is given to someone who has been taking opioids for a long time, it can cause symptoms of withdrawal right away. These symptoms are not medically dangerous, but can include:

- Cramping
- Muscle, joint and belly pain
- Vomiting (throwing up) and diarrhea
- Goosebumps and sweating
- Anxiety

## Where can I learn more?

For more information, you may visit these websites:

- National Harm Reduction Coalition – [harmreduction.org](https://harmreduction.org)
- Georgia Overdose Prevention – [georgiaoverdoseprevention.org/resources/assessing-an-overdose-and-administering-narcan-nasal-spray](https://georgiaoverdoseprevention.org/resources/assessing-an-overdose-and-administering-narcan-nasal-spray)

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**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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