



Help Someone in the Event of an Overdose

An overdose occurs when a person has taken too much of a substance, whether it's prescribed medication, illicit drugs, or a combination of drugs and alcohol. Today, about 130 people in the United States die from opioid overdoses every day. Fentanyl is the most dangerous among opioids, being 50 to 300 times more potent than morphine and 100 times stronger than heroin. Its impact is significant and growing, accounting for over half of all overdose deaths in the U.S.

If you know someone struggling with a substance use disorder who may be experiencing an opioid overdose, it's crucial to act quickly.

Recognize Overdose Symptoms

Common signs of an overdose include:

- Unresponsiveness or unconsciousness
- Gasping, snoring or difficulty breathing
- Shallow or slow breathing
- Blue lips and fingertips
- Clammy skin

Call 911

If you think someone has overdosed, call 911 immediately and try to place the person on their side to prevent choking. Provide 911 with:

- Your exact location
- Your phone number for follow-up
- Any visible signs of the drugs or alcohol that might have been consumed

Remember, many states have Good Samaritan laws that protect those who call 911 in good faith, even if illegal activity is involved. These laws encourage people to seek help without fear of legal repercussions.

Administer Naloxone

Naloxone is a medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of opioids, but it only works if opioids are present in the body. Naloxone is available in several forms:

- Intramuscular injection
- Auto-injector
- Intranasal atomizer kit
- Pre-packaged nasal spray (Narcan®)

Designed to block the effects of opioids in the brain, naloxone helps the person stay conscious and breathe normally. It should be administered as soon as possible, ideally within two to three minutes if available. Anyone, including emergency personnel, family members, friends or bystanders, can administer the medication when an individual is in crisis.

Stay with the Person Until Help Arrives

If naloxone isn't available, you can still assist the individual until first responders arrive by:

- Keeping them on their side to prevent choking

- Performing chest compressions if they are not breathing and there is no pulse

#SupportSobriety

If you or someone you know is struggling with substance use or addiction, call the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline at 1-800-662-4357.

