



Naloxone - frequently asked questions

- **What is naloxone?**
 - Naloxone is a medication used to reverse opioid overdose by blocking the effects of opioids in the brain.
- **How does naloxone work?**
 - Naloxone works by binding to opioid receptors in the brain, displacing other opioids and reversing their effects, such as slowed breathing.
- **When should naloxone be administered?**
 - Naloxone should be administered as soon as possible after recognizing symptoms of opioid overdose, such as unconsciousness, shallow breathing, or unresponsiveness.
- **Who can administer naloxone?**
 - Naloxone can be administered by anyone who has been trained or instructed on how to use it, including healthcare professionals, first responders, family members, and friends of individuals at risk of opioid overdose.
- **How is naloxone administered?**
 - Naloxone can be administered via intranasal spray, intra-muscularly, or auto-injector devices, depending on the formulation.
- **Is naloxone safe to use?**
 - Yes, naloxone is generally considered safe when administered correctly. However, it may cause withdrawal symptoms in individuals who are physically dependent on opioids.
- **What are the side effects of taking naloxone?**
 - Common side effects of taking naloxone include withdrawal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, sweating, tremors, and increased heart rate. These effects are usually temporary and resolve quickly.
- **Can naloxone be harmful if administered to someone who is not experiencing an opioid overdose?**
 - Naloxone is not harmful if administered to someone who has not overdosed on opioids. It only works to reverse opioid overdose and has no effect on individuals who have not used opioids.
- **Can someone overdose on naloxone?**
 - No. Naloxone is only active in the system if an opioid is present. It may take multiple doses of naloxone to reverse some opioid related overdoses.
- **Is naloxone available without a prescription?**
 - Yes, in 2023 the FDA approved naloxone as an over-the-counter product available without a prescription.
- **How long does naloxone last in the body?**
 - The effects of naloxone typically last for 30 to 90 minutes, depending on the dose and the individual's metabolism. More than one dose of naloxone may be required to reverse a potential overdose.



- **What should I do before and after administering naloxone?**
 - Always call 911 first! Administer naloxone. Then administer rescue breathing. Lay the person in the rescue position (on their side) to prevent choking. Stay with the person until help arrives.
- **Who should consider carrying/having naloxone?**
 - Individuals who are concerned about the risk of an opioid overdose, including people who use prescription or illicit opioids, their family members, friends, caregivers, or concerned members of the public should consider having naloxone on hand. This allows individuals to have naloxone available to administer if they witness someone experiencing an overdose.
- **Are there any age limitations on who can purchase or obtain non-prescription naloxone?**
 - There are no federal restrictions on who may purchase or obtain non-prescription naloxone nasal spray. Specific state laws may vary.
- **What is the Good Samaritan law?**
 - The Good Samaritan Law offers protection from arrest to individuals who seek medical assistance for a person experiencing a drug (or alcohol) overdose. **State laws may vary, and it is advised individuals research the Good Samaritan Law in their own state for limitations.*
- **How can I obtain naloxone?**
 - Naloxone is now available over the counter at most drug stores. Additionally most states have implemented naloxone distributions programs in partnerships with public health agencies and/or community organizations that allow easy access for individuals who are unable to afford the cost.
- **How can I obtain naloxone training?**
 - There are various naloxone training courses offered online, and some states offer naloxone training through their local fire department and / or health department services or centers.
 - <https://getnaloxonenow.org/#gettraining>

Sources:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/medications-substance-use-disorders/medications-counseling-related-conditions/naloxone>

<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/>

<https://www.getnaloxonenow.org/#home>

In nearly 40% of overdose deaths, someone else was present.¹ Having naloxone available allows bystanders to help a fatal overdose and save lives.

References:

O'Donnell, J., Gladden, R.M., Mattson, C.L., Hunter, C.T., & Davis, N.L. (2020, September 4). *Vital signs: Characteristics of drug overdose deaths involving opioids and stimulants — 24 states and the District of Columbia, January–June 2019* (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 69). Center for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6935a1>