

Opioid Overdose Awareness Toolkit



This toolkit is designed to help you identify and know what to do in a potential opioid overdose situation.

You will learn:

- ❑ **How to identify an opioid overdose**
- ❑ **How to stop an opioid overdose**
- ❑ **Where to get support**



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How to spot an opioid overdose

A person experiencing an opioid overdose may:

- Be **unresponsive**.
- Not be breathing** or will be breathing **very shallowly**.
- Have **changes in skin colour**. For lighter skinned people, the skin turns **bluish purple**. For darker skinned people, it turns **greyish or ashen**.
- Have a **limp body**.
- Be making a **deep gurgling** or **snoring sound**.
- Have **no pulse** or one that is **very slow** or **irregular**.

What is an opioid overdose?

Opioid drugs depress a person's central nervous system including the parts of the brain which control breathing and heart rate.

An opioid overdose is when an individual has taken a quantity of an opioid drug that causes their breathing and heart rate to slow to the point they can no longer support life.

Factors that can increase the risk of an opioid overdose include:

- Using opioids with other drugs that **depress respiratory function**, including **alcohol, benzodiazepines** and **other pain medications**.
- Starting to use opioids **after** a period of **abstinence** or **reduced use**.
- Fluctuations** in **quality** and **strength** of opioid supply.
- Using **alone**.
- Injecting**.

What to do in an opioid overdose?

If you suspect someone is experiencing an opioid overdose, **dial 999** for an ambulance **immediately**. The police will not be called and you won't get in trouble.

Try to keep the person awake by **speaking loudly** to them and **trying to rouse them**.

If you have naloxone **administer** it now (more info on next page).

If the person is **not breathing**, start **chest compressions**.

If there is no change in persons breathing and the ambulance hasn't arrived yet after 2 minutes, **administer more naloxone** and continue **chest compressions**. Repeat until breathing normally or ambulance has arrived.

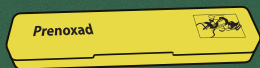
Let the Paramedics **know** that you have administered naloxone, **how many doses** and **how long ago**.

Be mindful that the naloxone might **wear off** before the effects of the opioid wears off so the person may go **back into overdose** if not assessed by a medic.

Naloxone

Naloxone is a medication that temporarily reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. It comes in a variety of forms, but most common are injectable pre-filled syringes and nasal spray. Both work in the same way, just with different methods of administration.

Injectable naloxone (Prenoxad)



Open package by twisting plastic packaging.

Find instruction document from inside plastic case.

Follow the instructions to assemble syringe and deliver dose into the outside of the thigh where a trouser seam would be.

If unresponsive after two to three minutes, administer another dose.

Nasal naloxone (Nyxoid)

Open Nyxoid box and remove a unit.

Read instructions on back of Nyxoid unit packaging.



Remove Nyxoid unit from packaging.

Spray into one nostril.

If unresponsive after two to three minutes, spray another dose into the other nostril.

You can get free naloxone and training on how to use it from BDP. Find our contact details on back page to get yours.

How to lower the risks of an opioid overdose

Thankfully, opioid overdoses are largely preventable. Follow these tips to reduce the potential harms from an opioid overdose.

- Try not to use on **your own**. If you have to, make arrangements for people to **check in on you afterwards**.
- Don't use with other drugs** that can affect your breathing, like **benzos**, **pregabalin** and **alcohol**, as they can **greatly increase** the risk of overdose.
- Go slow** – Start with a **small amount** even if you have picked up from a reliable source.
- Consider **smoking rather than injecting** but be aware that you can still go over from smoking.
- Being on **Opioid Substitution Therapy** dramatically lowers the chances of a fatal overdose. Speak to your GP or BDP to get on a script.
- Ensure you **always carry naloxone** on you – you could save someone's life.

Where to get support

BDP provide support for both those who take opioid drugs and those who might come in close contact with someone experiencing an opioid overdose.

Do you take opioids?

BDP can support you to be safer when using, help you to make changes in your use and to stop using if that is your goal.

Speak to your GP about accessing our services or contact us directly via the contact details at the bottom of this page.

Are you likely to come across someone experiencing an opioid overdose?

BDP can provide you with free naloxone training, free naloxone kit and advice and support.

Book on to free naloxone training via www.bdp.org.uk/naloxone or scan the QR code.



Contact BDP:

Call **0117 987 6000**

Email **info@bdp.org.uk**

Visit **11 Brunswick Square
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www.bdp.org.uk