

# How to Recognize and Reverse Opioid Overdose



Opioids can safely reduce pain when prescribed and used correctly. When misused, they can lead to addiction and even death.



When you know how to recognize and respond to opioid overdose, you can help save a life.

## SIGNS OF OVERDOSE

An overdose happens when a person takes more of a drug than their body can handle. Opioids slow down the body, and the brain forgets to tell the lungs to breathe. An overdose looks very different than an opioid high.

SIGNS OF BEING HIGH	SIGNS OF OVERDOSE
Muscles become relaxed	Limp body Very small pupils
Speech is slowed or slurred	Breathing is infrequent or has stopped
Sleepy looking	Deep snoring, gurgling, or rattling
Responsive to shouting, sternal rub, or earlobe pinch	Unresponsive
Normal heart rate and/or pulse	Slow or no heart rate and/or pulse
Normal skin tone	Pale or gray, clammy skin Blue or gray lips and/or fingertips

## HOW TO RESPOND TO AN OVERDOSE

When you see the signs of opioid overdose, take these steps:

- Call 911 immediately—a fatal overdose can happen in minutes.
- Try to keep the person alert.
- Lay the person on their left side to prevent choking.
- Administer a dose of naloxone if you have it.



<sup>1</sup> Arizona Department of Health Services, Opioid Epidemic. <https://www.azdhs.gov/prevention/womens-childrens-health/injury-prevention/opioid-prevention/index.php>

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# Carry naloxone. Save a life.

The drug naloxone (brand name Narcan®) is used in an emergency to prevent an opioid overdose from becoming fatal.

**Naloxone comes in two forms:** nasal spray (intranasal) and injection (intramuscular).



Anyone can purchase naloxone from any pharmacy in Arizona without a prescription due to the statewide standing order from the Arizona Department of Health Services—and administer it in an opioid-related overdose. Because Arizona is a Good Samaritan state, people aren't prosecuted for a drug crime by helping someone who may be experiencing an overdose, even if there are illegal drugs where they are.

## CONCERNED ABOUT USING NALOXONE? KNOWING THE FACTS CAN HELP.

NALOXONE MYTHS	NALOXONE REALITIES
Naloxone encourages drug use.	Naloxone gives patients a second chance at life.
Naloxone makes people violent.	Naloxone can cause confusion and uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms.
Naloxone could hurt someone not overdosing.	Naloxone is safe for everyone. Worst case, it will do nothing.
Overdose reversal requires a medical professional.	With basic training, anyone can recognize and respond to an opioid overdose.

## GET INFORMATION, TRAINING, AND SUPPORT.

Knowing how to prevent and respond to opioid misuse can make a big difference. These organizations can help you learn more:

- **Sonoran Prevention Works**  
Free trainings in overdose prevention, recognition, response, and naloxone use
- **Southwest Recovery Alliance**  
Free harm-reduction trainings and supplies
- **South Mountain Works**  
Trainings on preventing prescription drug abuse for parents, caregivers, and youth

## Let's create a brighter future for all Arizonans

Being prepared with naloxone can help save lives. Learn more about recognizing and responding to opioid overdose at [MobilizeAZ.com](https://MobilizeAZ.com).