

Naloxone Saves Lives: New Advice on Opioid Medication Safety

- Are you taking a prescription opioid medication*?
- Do you have a loved one who is taking an opioid medication?
- Do you have small children or adolescents in your home who could access your medication and accidentally overdose?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above questions, be prepared to respond to an overdose emergency. Naloxone – a medication that can stop an opioid overdose while it’s happening – is now available from the pharmacy without a prescription and can be used to protect your loved ones from accidental overdose. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **drug overdose is the leading cause of injury-related death in the U.S.**

Learn how to prevent, recognize and respond to an overdose emergency. Having naloxone on-hand and being trained to use it can prepare you to save a life.

*Common Prescription Names for Opioid Medications	
Generic Name	Brand Name
Oxycodone	Percocet®, Endocet®, Xartemis® XR, Oxycontin®, Xtampza® ER, Roxicodone®, Oxaydo®
Hydrocodone	Norco®, Lorcet®, Lortab®, Vicodin®, Hysingla® ER, Zohydro® ER
Codeine	Tylenol® #3, Tylenol® with Codeine
Morphine	MS Contin®, Kadian®, MorphaBond® ER, Arymo® ER
Fentanyl	Duragesic®, Onsolis®, Subsys®, Actiq®, Lazanda®, Fentora®, Abstral®
Hydromorphone	Dilaudid®
Oxymorphone	Opana®
Buprenorphine	Butrans®, Belbuca®, Suboxone®, Bunavail®, Zubsolv®
Methadone	Dolophine®, Methadose®
<i>Note: Heroin is not a prescription drug, but it is also an opioid substance.</i>	

Who Should Obtain Naloxone and How It Is Used

The U.S. Surgeon General suggests many people in the community obtain naloxone, including:

- Healthcare providers
- People at risk for opioid overdose *and* their family and friends
- Others who come into contact with people at risk for overdose

In Texas, you can get naloxone from a pharmacy without a prescription. If you or someone you know is taking opioids, talk to your pharmacist about getting naloxone. Training on the use of naloxone can be provided to members as well as their family and friends.

Naloxone comes in the form of an injection or nasal spray, and you don't have to be a medical professional to use it. With brief training, almost any adult can learn to give naloxone to someone showing the signs of opioid overdose. Studies show that **overdose deaths decrease when communities have access to naloxone.**

Scott and White Health Plan (SWHP) Coverage of Naloxone Products		
Naloxone Product	Formulary List	Tier
Naloxone Injection (Generic)	SWHP Group Value and Group Choice; Essential Health Benefits	\$0 copay
Narcan® Nasal Spray	SWHP Group Value and Group Choice; Essential Health Benefits	Tier 2 – Preferred Brand
Naloxone Auto-Injector (Authorized brand alternative for Evzio®)	SWHP Group Value and Group Choice	Tier 2 – Preferred Brand
	Essential Health Benefits	Excluded
<p><i>Note: Formulary information is effective as of 8/1/2020.</i></p> <p><i>For more information, please call the SWHP Pharmacy Help Desk at 1-800-728-7947.</i></p>		

How to Recognize and Respond to an Overdose

Opioid overdose is a life-threatening emergency. If you suspect someone is overdosing, **get medical help immediately by calling 911.**

Recognize these signs of overdose:

- Breathing that is very slow or stopped; gasping for air while sleeping
- Pale or clammy face
- Blue cast to the lips or fingers; gray/whitish cast to the lips in dark-skinned individuals
- Slowed heartbeat or low blood pressure
- Loss of alertness or arousability – the person can't wake up or speak
- Limp body
- Vomiting or gurgling sounds

Respond quickly by calling 911 and giving naloxone:

- Call 911 – say, “Someone is not breathing and unresponsive”
- Give naloxone dose per instructions
- Watch response; give repeat dose if there is no or minimal response in 2-3 minutes

- Lay the person on their side to prevent choking
- Stay until help arrives
- Follow the instructions of the 911 dispatcher

Ways to Prevent Overdose and Practice Medication Safety

If you or someone you know is taking an opioid medication, follow these safety measures:

- Take only medication that is prescribed to you
- Take only the prescribed amount – don't take more or extra doses
- Don't mix opioids with alcohol, muscle relaxants or sleeping pills
- Don't use opioids from an unknown source
- Remember abstinence lowers tolerance; if you stop taking opioids and then start again, take less when you restart
- Store opioids in a secure place and dispose of unused medications
- Teach family and friends how to respond to an overdose and use naloxone

Ask your doctor or pharmacist about getting naloxone and learning to use it. Share the information with family and friends. Together you can be prepared for an overdose emergency.