

## What puts someone at risk for an overdose?

### Using alone

When a person overdoses alone, they are at a greater risk of dying because no one is there to give them naloxone.

### Exposure to fentanyl

Fentanyl can be deadly, even if you snort it and even if you aren't aware it has been mixed into heroin or cocaine. It only takes a very small amount to cause an overdose and possibly death.

### Mixing drugs

Often, people overdose when they mix heroin or pain pills with alcohol and/or benzodiazepines (Xanax, Klonopin, Ativan, Valium). These combinations are dangerous because they make it hard for a person to breathe. **Don't mix opioids with alcohol or other drugs.**

### Lowered tolerance

A person's ability to process or tolerate an opioid can **decrease rapidly** if a person takes a break – even a short one – from using that opioid. Lowered tolerance can occur whether the reason for the break was intentional (addiction treatment) or unintentional (jail, hospitalization). If a person takes an opioid after their tolerance decreases, they are at risk for an overdose – even if they take the same amount that didn't cause them any problems in the past!

### Previous overdose

Any person who has survived an overdose before has an increased risk of having a fatal overdose in the future. **Teach your family and friends to recognize and respond to an overdose, including how to use naloxone.**

## Know that recovery is possible

If you or someone you know needs help, call **803-896-5555** or visit **www.daodas.sc.gov** and click on "I Need Help" or "Living in Recovery."

### Did you know...

Anyone can walk into a pharmacy in South Carolina and get naloxone **without a prescription**. It isn't free, but Medicaid and most insurance plans cover the cost.

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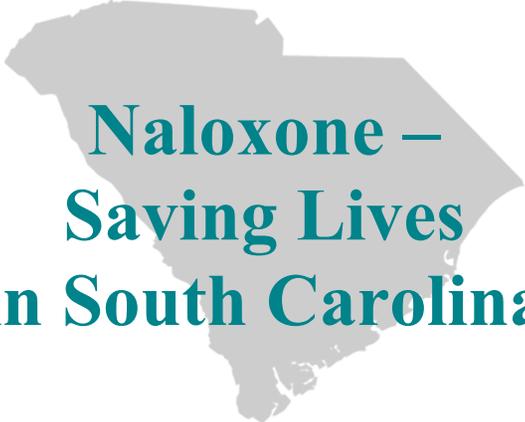
*Place local agency or community distributor contact information here.*

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South Carolina  
**DAODAS**  
Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services

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## Naloxone – Saving Lives in South Carolina

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### *A Guide for Patients, Caregivers & Community Members*

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*Because we care about your safety!*

South Carolina  
**DAODAS**  
Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services

## What is naloxone?

Naloxone is a medicine used to reverse an opioid overdose. When given during an overdose, naloxone blocks the effects of opioids on the brain and helps a person start breathing again. It can reverse an overdose in as little as two to five minutes.

Naloxone can't be abused and is safe to use even if given to someone who isn't experiencing an actual overdose. Naloxone **does not** reverse overdoses caused by non-opioid drugs (unless the drug is laced with an opioid like fentanyl).

Three different types of naloxone devices are commonly used (*see below*), and one of these should be part of any opioid recovery safety plan.



Narcan® pump nasal spray



Injectable



Atomizer nasal spray

## What are opioids?

Opioids are drugs that can slow or stop breathing, which can lead to death. Opioids can include prescription medications used to treat pain, such as morphine, codeine, oxycodone (OxyContin, Percodan, Percocet), hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, Norco), fentanyl (Duragesic, Fentora), hydromorphone (Dilaudid, Exalgo), and buprenorphine (Subutex, Suboxone). Opioids can also include non-prescription drugs such as heroin or synthetically manufactured (and dangerous) versions of fentanyl.

## How do I know if someone is overdosing?

An overdose can take just minutes or hours to occur, depending on the strength of the opioid and the timing of rescue efforts. Some signs of an overdose can include:

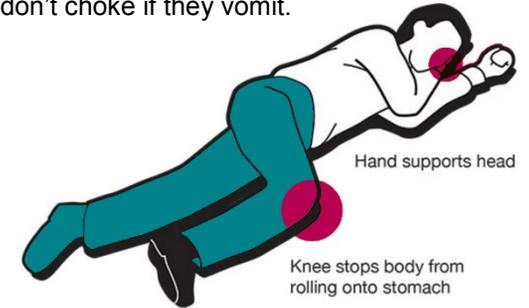
1. No response to calling out to the person or to rubbing the middle of their chest hard, back and forth, with your knuckles.
2. Very slow breathing (less than one breath every five seconds) or no breathing.
3. Slow or no pulse
4. Blue lips, fingernails or toenails
5. Pale and clammy face
6. Snoring or gurgling noises

## What SHOULD be done to a person experiencing an overdose...

1. **DO try to wake the person** by calling out to them and by rubbing the middle of their chest with your knuckles.
2. **DO call 9-1-1. An overdose is a MEDICAL EMERGENCY!** Tell 9-1-1 that the person has stopped breathing. Stay on the line with EMS throughout the following steps, even if you have to put the phone down.
3. **DO support the person's breathing.** If the person has stopped breathing, follow these steps.
  - a. Be sure nothing is in their mouth or throat that is blocking their airway.
  - b. Place one hand on the person's chin, tilt the head back, and pinch the nose closed.
  - c. Place your mouth over their mouth to make a seal and give two slow breaths. Blow enough air into their lungs to make their chest rise.



4. **DO use naloxone and continue rescue breathing** at one breath every five seconds. Breathing usually begins within three to five minutes after naloxone is used. If the person doesn't begin to breathe on their own within three to five minutes, give them a second dose of naloxone. (*Rescue breathing should continue while waiting for the naloxone to take effect.*)
5. If they begin breathing on their own, **DO place the person on their side** so they don't choke if they vomit.



6. **DO continue to monitor their breathing, stay with the person, and stay on the phone with EMS until they arrive.**

Naloxone only continues to work for 30 to 90 minutes, and overdose symptoms might return. It is important that the person gets to a hospital emergency room as soon as possible after he/she has been revived.

## What should NOT be done to a person experiencing an overdose...

1. **DO NOT** slap or violently shake the person to try to wake them. This might cause further injury and wastes valuable time.
2. **DO NOT** place the person in a cold shower or bath. This increases the risk of a fall, drowning, or going into shock.
3. **DO NOT** inject the person with any substance like salt water, milk, or "speed."
4. **DO NOT** try to make the person vomit or force them to eat or drink. Choking or inhaling vomit into the lungs can kill them.
5. **DO NOT** give them over-the-counter drugs like NoDoz® or vitamins like niacin.