

OVERDOSE PREVENTION FAQ'S

WHAT IS AN OPIOID?

Opioids are a class of prescription drugs used to reduce pain. Common opioids include morphine, codeine, oxycodone, fentanyl, heroin and methadone. Opioids also affect the brain's pleasure system, which can make people feel euphoric or high.

WHAT IS FENTANYL? WHY IS THERE AN INCREASE IN FENTANYL USE?

Fentanyl is a human-made opioid and is prescribed for pain relief. Fentanyl is a very potent opioid, a person can overdose if they ingest as little as 2-3 grains of the drug. Recently, fentanyl began being used as a cutting agent in many illicit drugs, including cocaine and heroin, as it very potent and cheap to manufacture.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF AN OPIOID OVERDOSE?

Signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose include slow or absent breathing; choking, gurgling or snoring sounds; a lack of consciousness; blue lips and nails; cold and clammy skin; and/or tiny pupils. Essentially, the body slows down so much so that the person stops breathing and the lack of oxygen to the brain can lead to brain damage, coma, or death.

WHAT IS NALOXONE?

Naloxone is an injectable and intranasal medication. Naloxone temporarily reverses overdose due to opioids and is not effective against other substances such as benzodiazepines. If the substance causing overdose cannot be determined, still administer Naloxone as a life-saving medication.

WHERE CAN I GET NALOXONE?

Take home naloxone kits are available from pharmacies, provincial harm reduction sites and First Nations health centres. The kits are available at no cost for First Nations and no prescriptions are required.

WILL I BE ARRESTED FOR SIMPLE DRUG POSSESSION IF I CALL 9-1-1 TO SAVE SOMEONE FROM OVERDOSE?

No, you will not be arrested. In May 2017, the Government of Canada enacted the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act to encourage people to seek help if someone is experiencing an overdose. The Act does not, however, provide legal protection against more serious offenses.

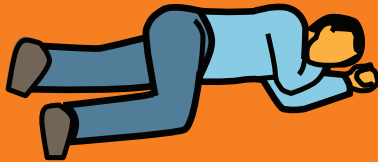


First Nations Health Authority
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WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK SOMEONE IS HAVING AN OPIOID OVERDOSE?

Call 911 or the emergency response number in your community. They will send first responders who can help keep the person alive. While you wait, provide rescue breaths and administer naloxone.

FOLLOW THE **SAVE ME STEPS** BELOW TO SAVE A LIFE.



If the person must be left unattended at any time, put them in the recovery position.



STIMULATE
Unresponsive?
CALL 911



AIRWAY



VENTILATE
1 breath every
5 seconds



EVALUATE



MEDICATION



EVALUATE
2nd dose?

Individuals who responded well to the initial dose of Naloxone should be kept under supervision for risk of rebound overdose.

WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm reduction is a public health approach that saves lives and provides safe choices to people struggling with addiction. This approach minimizes harm and potential danger for people using substances. A harm reduction approach meets people where they are at with acceptance and compassion – not judgment or shame. A harm reduction approach recognizes that every life is valuable and that substance use and addiction are complex and challenging.

People who struggle with addiction need to be supported not judged. Stigma around drug use can actually cause more deaths, as shamed people can become more reluctant to discuss their challenges with addiction or seek medical help.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I NEED SUPPORT?

For culturally safe crisis support available 24/7 contact:
KUU-US Crisis Support Service toll-free: **1-800-588-8717**

For anonymous and non-emergency assistance contact:
BC Drug and Poison Info Centre: **1-800-567-8911** or Healthlink BC: **8-1-1**

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Visit the FNHA's Overdose Prevention portal: www.fnha.ca/overdose
For questions about harm reduction: 4directions@fnha.ca