

Responding to an opioid poisoning

Focus on: **Calling 9-1-1 | Giving Breaths | Naloxone**


IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONDING

- Opioid poisonings slow/stop someone’s breathing.
- Providing a breath every 5 seconds is critical.
- A brain injury can occur within 3-5 minutes of not breathing.
- Everyone should call 9-1-1 and follow the call taker’s advice. If you are trained in CPR, you may be directed to give compressions and rescue breaths.
- **Always call 9-1-1 first.** If you’re on campus, you should then contact Campus Security at 250-721-7599.
- You will not get in trouble for calling 9-1-1 or administering Naloxone. You are protected by the [Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act](#)—even if you have taken opioids or have a small amount of opioids in your possession.
- Opioid emergency kits and Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) are installed in buildings across campus. The kits are intended for emergency use and contain easy-to-follow instructions.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT NALOXONE

- Naloxone is a medication that counters the effects of an opioid overdose and can save lives by restoring breathing.
- Naloxone only works on opioids but **does no harm** if there are no opioids in someone’s system. If they are non-responsive and have less than 10 breaths per minute, give breaths and use Naloxone.
- Naloxone works within 3 minutes. After 35 breaths, if they are not breathing on their own give another dose of Naloxone.
- Naloxone wears off in 30-120 minutes and an overdose can come back. Stay with the person or have someone else stay with the person.
- If someone requires more than 3 doses of Naloxone, continue to follow the steps outlined until emergency services arrive.
- Naloxone does not reduce the effects of poisonings or overdoses caused by non-opioid drugs such as barbiturates, benzodiazepines, psychostimulants, alcohol, anesthetics or sedatives.

Find a Naloxone kit on campus



Giving breaths is critical
Give 1 breath every 5 seconds
until someone is breathing normally

Responding to an emergency situation can be intense and emotionally overwhelming. Be kind to yourself and connect with supports if you are struggling. uvic.ca/student-wellness


STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF A DRUG POISONING

One of the greatest risks for a fatal drug poisoning is using alone. Have an overdose plan, stagger your use with someone else, have Naloxone nearby, and train people on how to respond.


Remember that the [Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act](#) provides legal protection for people who experience or witness an overdose and call 9-1-1 or their local emergency number for help.

Start low, go slow. Substances aren’t always pure and can be stronger than expected. Having a poor health status (like being sick) can increase risk for overdose.


Find out how and where to test your drugs at substance.uvic.ca. Fentanyl testing strips and other harm reduction supplies are also available at the Harm Reduction Centre.




UVic’s [Harm Reduction Centre](#) and the University of Victoria Students’ Society (UVSS) have resources that support safer substance use on campus.




Students can access Naloxone training (including free kits) through [UVSS Safer Use](#) training sessions.




Students can [book a private appointment](#) with a Student Wellness nurse for training and a free Naloxone kit.




Learn about harm reduction and Naloxone use at [Toward the Heart](#), [Canadian Red Cross](#) and the [Canadian Pharmacy Association](#).



[LifeguardConnect](#) is a free virtual overdose prevention app that can be used on a tablet or smart phone.



Use at an overdose [prevention site](#) whenever possible.



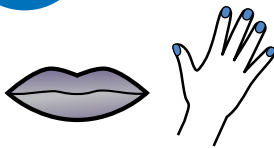
Keep an eye out for Drug Poisoning Overdose Advisories issued by Island Health.

Responding to an opioid poisoning

Focus on: **Calling 9-1-1 | Giving Breaths | Naloxone**

1

Know the signs of overdose, assess and call for help



Blue or purple/grey or green lips and fingertips, depending on skin tone



Breathing is less than a breath every 5 seconds



Snoring or gurgling sounds



Cannot be woken up and unresponsive to pain



Check for pulse and respirations and call for help

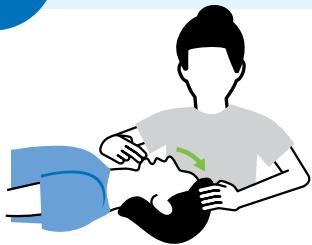
Call 9-1-1 and follow their advice

Check for a pulse and respirations for 5-10 seconds. If there is no pulse, give compressions and rescue breaths (cycles of 30 compressions and 2 breaths). If there is a pulse but no or minimal respirations, give rescue breaths. If you're on campus, in addition to calling 9-1-1, have someone call Campus Security at 250-721-7599.



2

Check/clear airway and provide breaths



Tilt head back, check airway, clear airway to prepare to give breaths



Pinch nose, give 1 breath—watch for the chest rising



Evaluate: is the person breathing normally? If less than 10 breaths per minute go to next step

Giving breaths is critical

Give 1 breath every 5 seconds until someone is breathing normally. Count out loud to keep breaths regular.

3

Prepare and administer Naloxone, keep giving breaths

NEEDLE

Give 1 breath every 5 seconds

1 Take one Naloxone ampoule out



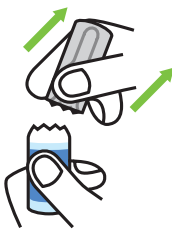
GIVE BREATH

2 Hold the ampoule by the top, tilt and swirl to get all liquid into the bottom half



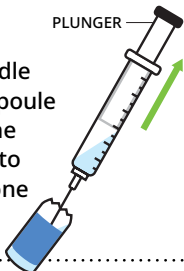
GIVE BREATH

3 Snap the top of the ampoule off, snapping away from yourself



GIVE BREATH

4 Put the needle into the ampoule and draw the plunger up to load Naloxone



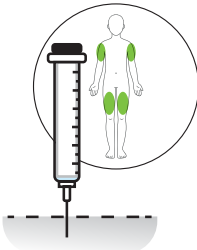
GIVE BREATH

5 Point needle up and push out most of the air



GIVE BREATH

6 Push the needle into the upper arm or thigh and push the plunger down firmly until it clicks



GIVE BREATH

NASAL

Give 1 breath every 5 seconds



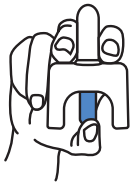
1 Peel open the package

GIVE BREATH



2 Pull out the device Do not press until ready to give Naloxone

GIVE BREATH



3 Hold the device in the correct position

GIVE BREATH



4 Place the nozzle into one nostril

GIVE BREATH



5 Press down on the plunger firmly

4

Evaluate: Check for breathing

If no, continue providing breaths



After 3 minutes (35 breaths) if they are not breathing on their own keep providing breaths and give another dose of Naloxone