

# Responding to an Opioid Poisoning



by focusing on: 911 \* Breathing \* Naloxone

## Step 1

### SIGNS OF AN OPIOID POISONING



Blue lips & finger tips  
(lighter skin tones)

Purple/ashen lips & finger tips  
(darker skin tones)



Breathing is less than a breath every 5 seconds



Snoring or gurgling sounds



Cannot be woken up & unresponsive to pain

Everyone should call 911 and follow their advice. If trained in CPR, check pulse for less than 10 seconds. If no pulse, give compressions and rescue breaths.

## Step 2

### CHECK/CLEAR AIRWAY & 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.

## Step 3

### PREPARE NALOXONE & KEEP GIVING BREATHS



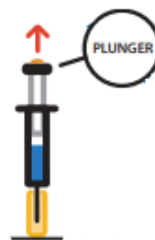
Take one Naloxone ampoule out



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



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



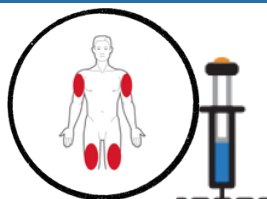
Put the needle into the ampoule and draw the plunger up to load Naloxone

## Step 4

### PREPARE NEEDLE & ADMINISTER NALOXONE



Point needle up and push out most of the air



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



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**

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## IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW 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 911 and follow their advice. If trained in CPR, check pulse for less than 10 seconds. If no pulse, give compressions and rescue breaths.
  - Naloxone reverses the effects of opioids and restores 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 & 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: an overdose can come back. Stay with the person or have someone else stay with the person.
  - If someone requires more than the 3 doses of Naloxone, continue to follow the steps outlined until emergency services arrive.
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- **You can only do the best you can. Remember to breathe for yourself, and talk with someone supportive after responding to a drug poisoning.**

## STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF A DRUG POISONING

- One of the greatest risks for a fatal drug poisoning is using alone, use with someone and stagger your use so you can help one another if a drug poisoning occurs.
- Use at an **overdose prevention site** whenever possible. 
- Call the **National Overdose Response Service - 1-888-688-6677**
- Have an overdose plan, have Naloxone nearby, train people on how to respond.
- **LifeguardConnect** is a free virtual overdose prevention app that can be used on a tablet or smart phone 
- Start low, go slow – the substance may be stronger or contain other substances that increase risk of drug poisoning
- Take care of yourself – use less if you are unwell or have health issues
- Access **drug checking services** to understand what is in your substances 