

Narcan Spray: A Lifesaving Tool for Opioid Overdoses

Learn how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose with Narcan Spray

What is Narcan Spray?

- Narcan Spray is a brand name for naloxone, a medication that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.
- Opioids are a class of drugs that include prescription painkillers, heroin, and fentanyl. They can slow down breathing and heart rate, and cause unconsciousness and death.
- Narcan Spray can restore normal breathing and consciousness in someone who has overdosed on opioids. It is sprayed into one nostril of the person who is overdosing.
- Narcan Spray is safe and effective, and has no potential for abuse. It does not work on overdoses caused by other drugs, such as alcohol, cocaine, or benzodiazepines.

Why is Narcan Spray important?

- Opioid overdoses are a major public health crisis in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 93,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2020, and nearly 70% of those involved opioids.
- Narcan Spray can save lives by preventing death or brain damage from lack of oxygen during an opioid overdose. It can also buy time for emergency medical services to arrive and provide further treatment.
- Narcan Spray is easy to use and can be administered by anyone who has received basic training on how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose. It is available without a prescription in most states, and can be obtained from pharmacies, community organizations, or online.

How to use Narcan Spray?

- If you suspect someone is overdosing on opioids, the first step is to call 911 and ask for help. Tell the operator that the person is not breathing or is unresponsive, and that you have Narcan Spray.
- While you wait for help, check the person's breathing and pulse. If they are not breathing or have no pulse, start CPR if you know how.
- If the person is breathing, lay them on their back and tilt their head back. Remove the Narcan Spray from its package and hold it with your thumb on the bottom and your first and middle fingers on either side of the nozzle.
- Insert the tip of the nozzle into one nostril of the person, until your fingers touch their nose. Press the plunger firmly to spray the medication. Remove the device from the nostril and discard it.
- Watch the person closely for signs of improvement, such as breathing more normally, waking up, or moving. If they do not respond within 2 to 3 minutes, or if they stop breathing again, give them another dose of Narcan Spray in the other nostril.
- Stay with the person until help arrives. Keep them warm and comfortable, and try to keep them awake and calm. If they become agitated or violent, do not argue or restrain them, but keep a safe distance and call for assistance.

What to do after using Narcan Spray?

- Narcan Spray is not a substitute for medical care. **It only lasts for 30 to 90 minutes,** and the person may relapse into an overdose once it wears off. Therefore, it is crucial to call 911 and get the person to a hospital as soon as possible.
- Do not let the person use more opioids after giving them Narcan Spray. This can cause another overdose, and Narcan Spray may not work as well the second time.
- Encourage the person to seek treatment for their opioid use disorder. Narcan Spray can save their life, but it does not address the underlying causes of their addiction. There are effective medications, counseling, and support groups that can help them recover and prevent future overdoses.
- Take care of yourself and seek support if you need it. Witnessing or responding to an opioid overdose can be traumatic and stressful. You may experience a range of emotions, such as fear, anger, guilt, or sadness. You are not alone, and there are resources and people who can help you cope.