



Responding to an Overdose and Naloxone

January 2023

Introduction

- In keeping with changes to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the University of Ottawa has conducted a [risk assessment](#) and identified situations in which staff could be exposed to an opioid overdose.
- While such events are rare, uOttawa has increased availability of naloxone kits as well as prepared this awareness presentation to recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms of an opioid overdose.

Risk of Overdose

- There is some risk because of where we're located, and we've had a small number of incidents. Most of the campus community is not affected. However, these uOttawa community members may encounter an opioid overdose:
 - Protection Services members: staff who respond to medical calls made to the Protection Services phone lines (ext. 5411 or 5499).
 - VCERT: students who volunteer with Protection Services.
 - First aiders: staff who volunteer as part of the workplace first aid program.
 - Housing community advisers: staff who support the wellness of students living in residence.
 - Residence safety team: staff helping to improve the student experience and ensure the safety of students living in residence.
 - Student Health and Wellness Centre staff providing front-line medical services to students.
 - Staff in front-line service positions in higher-risk buildings.

Risk of Overdose

- There is no easy way to know if fentanyl (or carfentanil) is present.
- **You can't see it, smell it or taste it.**
- **A very small amount of the powder can cause an overdose.**

Signs and Symptoms of Overdose

- These are common signs of an opioid (heroin, morphine, fentanyl, methadone or OxyContin) overdose:
 - Slow, irregular or no breathing
 - Blue fingernails or lips
 - Limp body
 - Deep snoring or gurgling sounds
 - Loss of consciousness or person passed out (can't wake the person up)
 - Unresponsiveness (no answer when you talk to them or shake them)
 - Pinpoint (tiny) pupils

What is Naloxone?

- Naloxone is a fast-acting, easy to administer drug used to temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It can restore breathing in two to five minutes.
- Opioids affect certain receptors in your brain. Naloxone kicks opioids off these receptors and binds to them instead. This reverses or blocks the effects of opioids.
- Naloxone only works if you have opioids in your system such as fentanyl, heroin, morphine or codeine.

Naloxone is Safe

- Naloxone is safe for all ages.
- It only works if you have opioids in your system.
- You can't use naloxone improperly and it doesn't create dependence. It's safe to keep a naloxone kit on hand.

Naloxone on Campus

- All Protection Service members carry naloxone with them. It is also available in campus AED (automated external defibrillator) cabinets, including in residences. Signage has been installed to indicate where it is.
 - **Naloxone is not available in off-campus locations (e.g., 1 Nicholas, Bank).**
- Refer to the [campus map](#) for AED cabinet locations.



Naloxone Kits

- Naloxone is available in a blister package in the AED cabinet.
- If the naloxone kit remains in the AED cabinet, it's good for up to three years.
- Protection Services manages the naloxone kits.



How to Respond to an Opioid Overdose

1. Retrieve the **naloxone kit and AED** from the AED cabinet. You'll hear an alarm and the Protection Services dispatch centre will be notified.
2. Put on the **nitrile gloves**.
3. Shout the person's name (if known) and **shake** their shoulders.
4. If the person is unresponsive, **call 613-562-5411 or 911 immediately**.
5. Insert the nozzle **into the person's nostril** and press the plunger down firmly to give the dose. Only spray once the plunger is in the nostril. The kit provides a single dose.
6. Perform **chest compressions** only (NOT rescue breaths).
7. Turn on the AED and follow instructions.
8. If you see no improvement after two or three minutes, **repeat steps 5 and 6**.

How to Respond to an Opioid Overdose

1. Ensure to **stay with the person**, as they may be confused / frightened when they wake up. Provide support and tell them what happened.
2. Opioids can last longer in the body than naloxone.
3. Naloxone may cause withdrawal. This may make the person want to use again, which increases the risk of overdose as the naloxone wears off.
4. Withdrawal can be very uncomfortable, but is not life-threatening. Withdrawal symptoms may include **muscle aches, sweating, nausea/vomiting, agitation, or irritability**.
5. Protection Services or paramedics will arrive with assistance.
6. Wash your hands and provide a statement to Protection Services / paramedics about the care you've offered.

Additional Resources

- [Ottawa Public Health](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act](#)

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- [Confirm your review and comprehension of this presentation on naloxone and opioid overdose.](#)



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