

## Five Essential Steps When Encountering Suspected Overdose

### **Step 1: Call for Help**

People suffering from an opioid overdose need immediate medical attention.

Ensure that emergency medical services are being dispatched by contacting dispatch or calling 911.

If an AED or other medical equipment is available, quickly get it or have someone do it for you.

### **Step 2: Check for Signs of Opioid Overdose**

Look for signs of overdose such as...

- slow or absent breathing
- unresponsiveness
- bluish fingernails or lips
- pinpoint pupils
- pulse that is very weak, slow or absent.

Assess for responsiveness by shouting at the person and tapping their shoulders or by doing a sternal rub.

Check the person's breathing by watching for rise and fall of the chest.

If trained to do so, briefly check the person's carotid pulse.

### **Step 3: Support the Person's Breathing**

People who have overdosed on opioids die due to disruption of breathing.

If trained to provide rescue breaths or CPR, do so prior to administering naloxone.

If the victim is not breathing at all, and you are not trained in rescue breathing or are unable to do so, start compression-only or Hands-Only CPR prior to giving naloxone.

If someone else is performing the above interventions, naloxone may be given simultaneously.

## **Step 4: Administer Naloxone**

It is not possible to overdose on naloxone.

Give naloxone as soon as it is available.

Monitor for return of normal breathing.

Re-administer naloxone every 3 minutes if the person does not begin breathing normally.

Naloxone is effective 30-45 minutes so it is possible for a victim to relapse after it has worn off.

Naloxone will not be effective on uppers or other “downers” but is not harmful if it is given even if the person is not suffering from an opioid overdose.

## **Step 5: Monitor the Person’s Response**

After medication administration, continue rescue breathing and/or compressions until the person begins to wake up, breathe on their own, or advanced medical help arrives.

If a person begins to wake up, roll them into the recovery position to help protect their airway.

A person who has received naloxone, may experience signs of acute withdrawal such as aggression, sweating, and vomiting

## **Do's and Don'ts in Responding to Opioid Overdose**

DO...support the person's breathing

DO...put the person in the recovery position if he or she is breathing on their own

DO...stay with the person and keep him/her warm

DON'T...slap or forcefully stimulate the person as this may injure the person

DON'T...put the person in cold shower or bath

DON'T...try to force the person to vomit drugs that he or she may have swallowed