

When am I most at risk for an overdose?

- When I haven't used opiates before or in a long time
- When I use opiates with alcohol or other drugs
- When I use different opiates than I've used before
- When I'm alone
- When I've been sick, tired, run down or dehydrated
- When I take more than prescribed

What should I do if I think someone has overdosed?

1. **Shout** their name and **shake** their shoulders
2. **Call 911** if unresponsive
3. **Give naloxone** (if available): 1 spray into their nostril
4. **Perform rescue breathing** and/or chest compressions
5. **Stay with them** until help arrives. If no improvement after 2-3 minutes, repeat steps 3 and 4.

Opioid Overdose Prevention Tips

Tips for preventing and reacting to an opioid overdose

Southwestern Public Health

St. Thomas Site

1230 Talbot Street, St. Thomas, ON
(519) 631-9900

Woodstock Site

410 Buller Street, Woodstock, ON
(519) 421-9901



Which drugs are opioids?

Codeine, Fentanyl (Duragesic), Heroin, Hydrocodone (Vicodin), Hydromorphone (Dilaudid), Methadone, Morphine, Oxycodone (Oxycontin, Percocet).



What are the signs of an overdose?

- Clammy, sweaty skin
- Shallow or raspy breathing
- Snoring or gurgling sounds
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions
- Hard to wake up
- Blue or grayish lips and fingernails

How can I stay safer when using opioid drugs?

Be careful when switching drugs.

- If you change your pattern of drug use, you should find out information about the new drug you're trying.
- Always consider reducing your use of a new drug by 50%. It is hard to tell how strong a new drug is, and how your body will respond.

Be aware of changes in your tolerance.

- If you stop or even cut down on opiates, it only takes a few days for your tolerance to drop (ex. Time in hospital, detox or jail).
- After a few days without opiates such as oxycontin, heroin, or methadone, a dose that was fine at one time could now kill you.

Don't mix drugs.

- Mixing opiates with alcohol or other drugs increases the risk of overdose.

Don't use alone.

- Let people you trust know what you're doing and when.
- If you're using with a friends, talk about an overdose plan.

Everything new, every time.

- Sharing or reusing any injection or inhalation equipment can increase your risk of getting bloodborne infections (HIV, Hepatitis B and C), skin infections and abscesses.

Carry a naloxone kit.

