

Patient Overdose Prevention Education

How You Can Prevent Overdose

1. **KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TAKING**

Go online to http://www.drugs.com/pill_identification.html to learn what pills you are taking, and the dose. *Taking 5mg of Vicodin is not the same as taking 5mg of Percocet or 5mg of Methadone. The same amount (dose) of two different drugs may have different effects and symptoms.* Know the difference between short-acting, long-acting, and extended release.

2. **AVOID MIXING WITH ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS**

Drugs with the same effects (i.e. downers like opioids and alcohol) can dangerously slow breathing. For drugs with opposite effects (like opioids and stimulants), you may take too much of the downer because you can't feel its full effects.

3. **KNOW YOUR TOLERANCE**

If you have a period of not taking your prescribed opioid and then start taking it again **TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR** first! It may take less of the medication to have the same effect. Your tolerance may also be lower if you are sick, tired, haven't eaten, or lost weight.

4. **AVOID USING OTHER THAN AS DIRECTED**

Prescription medications can take a long time to have their full effect. Keep this in mind if you think the medication is not working fast enough. Avoid chewing, cutting, crushing, or dissolving opioid tablets or capsules and talk to your doctor if you need to take more medication than prescribed to get pain relief—you may need a different dose or type of medication.

REMEMBER:

Follow dosing and let your doctor know if you are in drug treatment or are taking any other medications!

Signs of an Opioid Overdose

- Blue lips, fingernails, or toenails
- Very slow or no breathing
- Faint pulse or no pulse
- Pale and clammy skin
- Unresponsive to calling their name or to pain
- Snoring or gurgling noises while asleep or nodding out

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE OVERDOSES AND IS UNCONSCIOUS

- Try waking them, yell their name, rub chest bone with your knuckles
- If they are not breathing or have very slow breathing:

Start Rescue Breathing:



Pinch nose, tilt head



1 breath every 5 seconds

- **Call 911** - say that the person isn't breathing
- If you're alone, put the person in the **Recovery Position** before calling 911



- Consider using Narcan® if you have it/can use it.
 - **Narcan® is a prescription medicine that stops the effects of opioids and restores the victim's breathing. Narcan® may save their life but must be given quickly.**
- Continue rescue breathing until Rescue arrives. Tell them what the person took, how much, and any other information that could help save the victim's life.

Ask your doctor for a prescription for **Narcan®** if you are concerned about opioid overdose