



Take Home Naloxone Program FAQ for Clients

Question: *What is Naloxone?*

Answer: Naloxone is an antidote to an opioid overdose. An overdose of opioid drugs such as fentanyl, morphine, heroin, methadone, or oxycodone can cause a person's breathing to slow or stop. Naloxone is an injectable medication that can reverse this so the person can breathe normally and regain consciousness. Naloxone does not work for overdoses such as cocaine, ecstasy, GHB or alcohol. However, if an overdose involves multiple substances including opioids, naloxone will help by temporarily reversing the effects of the opioid.

- Naloxone does not get a person intoxicated/stoned/high, quite the opposite.
- Naloxone is not poisonous, and causes NO harm if swallowed.
- Naloxone is very safe
- Naloxone is a 'Prescription Only Medication' and is currently only licensed in Canada for administration by intramuscular injection

Question: *What is a Take Home Naloxone Kit?*

Answer: A Take Home Naloxone kit contains everything that is needed to help reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Each kit contains: naloxone, alcohol swabs, latex gloves, rescue breathing mask, syringes, and steps to respond to an opioid overdose.

Question: *How can someone get a kit?*

Answer: Kits are available through a prescription from a health professional and are prescribed to individuals who have a history of opioid use. Health professionals provide hands-on training for all individuals prescribed a kit. To find an agency or a location prescribing take home kits visit: www.drugsfool.ca

Question: *Does everyone have to receive training and how long is it?*

Answer: Training is required for anyone receiving a kit. It takes approximately 15 minutes to an hour to complete, depending on an individual's current knowledge.

Question: *Why do I have to complete the overdose training before I get a Naloxone kit?*

Answer: Responding to an overdose can be overwhelming if you don't know what you are dealing with or how to react in an emergency situation. The training provides knowledge about how to: reduce overdose risk, recognize an opiate overdose, address myths, provide the correct emergency response and understand the importance of calling 911, perform rescue breathing, place someone in the recovery position, and give naloxone. The knowledge and skills are not

intended to replace emergency care. However, knowledge about overdose and administering naloxone can help keep someone alive while waiting for EMS to arrive.

Question: *Can anyone get a kit, including family or friends for someone who uses opiates?*

Answer: Anyone who has a history of opioid use meets the criteria for a prescription of a naloxone kit. At this time, family and friends do not qualify.

Question: *How should someone respond to an opioid overdose if they don't have naloxone?*

Answer: Call 911 and start rescue breathing. Opioid overdose results in death because the person who has overdosed stops breathing. The most important thing you can do if someone is not breathing is breathe for him/her until medical help arrives or he/she starts breathing on their own again.

Question: *Can Naloxone cause harm or be abused?*

Answer: Naloxone is a very safe drug. It has been approved for use in Canada for over 40 years and is on the World Health Organization List of Essential Medicines. Naloxone only works to block the effects of opioids in the brain and cannot get a person high. For individuals who are dependent on opioids it may cause them to go into withdrawal. Naloxone has no effect on someone who has no opioids in their system.

Question: *Can only medical professionals recognize an opioid overdose and inject naloxone?*

Answer: Research and experience shows that if people are given basic training they are able to recognise and an overdose and administer naloxone safely and effectively.

Question: *Can someone who has overdosed on crack/coke be given naloxone?*

Answer: Naloxone will not work on a cocaine overdose, only an opioid overdose. If it is a cocaine overdose that also involves opioids, naloxone may help. Naloxone will have no effect on someone who has no opioids in their system. Cocaine overdose is dangerous and is a complicated medical emergency — call 911.

Question: *Is expired naloxone effective?*

Answer: Like most medication, naloxone will start to lose its effectiveness after the expiry date. However, it may be strong enough to reverse an overdose if that is the only kit that is available. It is not toxic so use it and continue to perform rescue breathing. However, it is important to replace the naloxone as soon as you use it or it is out of date. You will not be required to complete the training again if it is still within 1 year of your previous training.

Question: *Where can I find more information?*

Answer: www.drugsfool.ca or call Health Link at 811