

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

Proposed publication date: August 7, 2017
Content provided by: Alberta Health Services

Overdose prevention awareness

August 31 is International Overdose Awareness Day, a global event to raise awareness of overdose and reduce stigma of drug-related death.

In Alberta, opioid related overdoses are occurring at an alarming rate. Fortunately, many overdose deaths are preventable if medical help is given when you first begin to notice any symptoms.

Here are the signs of an opioid overdose:

- Their breathing is slow or they may not be breathing at all
- Body is very limp
- You can't wake them up
- Blue lips and nails
- Skin is cold and/or clammy
- Gurgling or snoring sounds
- Choking or throwing up
- Pupils are tiny
- Seizures

If you come across someone or are with someone who may be overdosing, call 911 and, stay with them until we arrive. They may need your help while the ambulance is on its way. Due to the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act people who experience or witness an overdose and who call 911 for help will receive some protection under the law.

While you wait for help, keep checking on them. Are they breathing? If not, begin rescue breathing. Are they responding or breathing on their own? If they are still unresponsive and you



have naloxone – follow the step by step instructions and administer naloxone. Naloxone can temporarily reverse the symptoms of an opioid overdose.

For more information on opioid overdose, or how to get help for yourself or a loved one, including where to get naloxone, visit www.stopods.ca.