

# What You Need to Know About **Naloxone**



## Side effects of naloxone

Naloxone can (but does not always) cause withdrawal symptoms, unpleasant physical reactions, in people who are physically dependent on opioids. Withdrawal symptoms are not life-threatening<sup>1</sup> and may include fever, anxiety and irritability, rapid heart rate, sweating, nausea, vomiting, and tremors.

**Naloxone saves lives** because it can quickly restore normal breathing to a person whose breathing has slowed or stopped as a result of overdosing on prescription opioid medications, heroin, or drugs that are adulterated and contaminated with an opioid like fentanyl (e.g., cocaine, methamphetamine).<sup>1</sup>

Three forms of naloxone products are available: nasal spray, injection, and auto-injection. [The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's \(SAMHSA\) Opioid Overdose Prevention Toolkit](#) can help you learn about the different forms and how to use them.

**Naloxone can be given safely to people of all ages, from infants to elderly adults. This includes a child who may have accidentally taken an opioid pain reliever or medicine to treat opioid use disorder.<sup>2</sup>**



## How much does naloxone cost?

The cost varies depending on where and how you get it, as well as your health insurance. People with insurance should check with their insurance company to see what the cost is, while individuals without insurance can check with their local pharmacies. **Contact your local health department to learn about community programs that may provide naloxone for free or for a reduced cost.**

## General advice to prevent overdose<sup>2</sup>

- Only take opioids as prescribed.
- Lock up opioids to keep them away from children, prevent them being taken accidentally, or being taken without permission (stolen).
- Follow the naloxone package instructions that come with the product and check the expiration date,<sup>1</sup> so it can be replaced before it expires.
- Dispose of opioids properly.
- Have naloxone readily available if needed in an emergency.

Remember, naloxone is a safe medicine.<sup>1</sup> By carrying naloxone, even when you are away from home, you can save a life.<sup>3</sup> Let others you are with know you have it, where it is, and how to use it.



## Where can you get Naloxone?

If you or someone you know takes opioids or was prescribed an opioid medication, you can go to a pharmacy or community-based program to get trained to use naloxone and receive naloxone.<sup>4</sup> For example: *“I think I need naloxone because I’m worried my [friend/family member] could overdose, or my doctor recommended that I get it.”*<sup>1</sup>

Currently all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico allow pharmacists to dispense naloxone without a prescription.<sup>5</sup>



For more information and resources on naloxone, visit [cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/hcp/toolkits/naloxone](https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/hcp/toolkits/naloxone), and for drug overdose prevention, visit [cdc.gov/overdose-prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention).

<sup>1</sup><https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/naloxone>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-recommends-health-care-professionals-discuss-naloxone-all-patients-when-prescribing-opioid-pain>

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/919515?src=par\\_cdc\\_stm\\_mscpedt&f=1#vp\\_1](https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/919515?src=par_cdc_stm_mscpedt&f=1#vp_1)

<sup>4</sup><https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/opioids-and-addiction/naloxone-advisory/index.html>

<sup>5</sup><http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6831e1>