

Opioid Overdose



If someone you know is taking prescription pain medication or using heroin...

...would you know what to do if they accidentally overdosed?

This information could help you save a life.



Overdose Prevention Education

River Region Human Services is committed to providing services to decrease and eliminate the risk of overdose related to opioid misuse. Opioids are found in two large groups consisting of medications used to treat multiple medical conditions and illicit drugs that are readily available for misuse. A naïve person with limited knowledge or education regarding opioids can accidentally overdose on a relatively smaller dose leading to breathing difficulties which can result in severe medical complications and even death.

Signs of opioid overdose can include, but are not limited to; difficulty in breathing, increased drowsiness, altered mental status, constricted pupils and in some cases, seizure-like activity.

There are a few simple steps to follow in order to avoid an accidental opioid overdose:

- Use medications only as prescribed. Do not take more than prescribed per dosage instructions, and do not share medications with others.
- If you are receiving opioid medications (i.e.), inform your medical professional of other medications you have been prescribed. This will decrease the risk of drug interactions leading to increased levels of opioids in your system which could result in an accidental overdose.
- If you are starting a medication-assisted treatment program, changing your program for opioid maintenance, or being discharged from an opioid program, you are at an increased risk of accidentally overdosing. Ensure that you communicate any changes in medication with your treatment team at the clinic and follow the procedures and protocols for a successful transition for your opioid treatment.
- Do not use any illicit drugs while being in a medication assistance treatment program. This can result in an adverse interaction at the brain level, resulting in breathing problems and death.
- If you are experiencing unstable mood swings or feelings of depression, ask for mental health services and request an evaluation for proper treatment. Our goal is to help you dismantle any thoughts of over-medicating and thoughts of suicide through properly assessing a mental health evaluation for treatment.
- If you feel you have accidentally overdosed on opioids, **call 911 immediately** or go to the nearest emergency room. Effects of opioids can be reversed for a limited time with the use of Naloxone or Narcan, a medication designed to rapidly reverse an opioid overdose.
- River Region has a supply of Naloxone and provides education and training for individuals and their families. If you are at risk of an opioid overdose, speak with a member of your treatment team regarding Naloxone and its use. If you are not an established client and awaiting treatment, you may still request Naloxone by visiting River Region Human Services located at 3901 Carmichael Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32207 (Duval County, Florida); and 2141 Loch Rane Blvd., Orange Park, FL 32073 (Clay County, Florida).

Taking Action in an Opioid Overdose

1 Check: could this be an opioid overdose?

Look and listen for:

- Slow or no breathing
- Gurgling, gasping, or snoring
- Clammy, cool skin
- Blue or gray lips or nails
- Pill bottles, needles, or alcohol



Try to wake them up:



- Shake them and call their name.
- Rub your knuckles hard over their chest bone.

If they don't wake up, you need to act fast!

2 Call 911.



- Say where you are and that the person isn't breathing.
- You don't need to say anything about drugs or medications.

Good Samaritan Law

If you get medical help for an overdose or alcohol poisoning, you and the victim cannot be charged for drug use, possession, or underage drinking.



WA RCW 69.50.315

3 Give naloxone and start rescue breathing.

- **Give the naloxone.** Follow the instructions on the package or in the overdose rescue kit.
- **Start rescue breathing.**
- If they don't respond in 3–5 minutes, give a **second dose of naloxone. Keep rescue breathing.**



Do rescue breathing even if you don't have naloxone. **Oxygen is critical!**

Rescue Breathing



- Tilt head back. Lift chin. Pinch nose.
- Give **2 quick breaths.** Chest should rise.
- Then give **1 slow breath every 5 seconds.**
- **Keep going** until they start breathing or until help arrives.

4 Stay with them.

- If they start to wake up and breathe, stay with them.
- **Watch them until medical help arrives.** Naloxone wears off in 30–90 minutes. When it does, the person can stop breathing again.
- If you must leave, put them into the recovery position and in a place they can be found.



Recovery Position

