

OPTIONS

SAVE LIVES

🕒 General Information

What is naloxone?

Naloxone is a life-saving drug that quickly stops the effects of an opioid overdose. It works by attaching to opioid receptors in the brain and blocking the effects of opioids. It helps a person start to breathe again if they have stopped.

What forms of naloxone are available? Is one form better than another?

Naloxone comes in two forms: **injectable** (or “intramuscular”), and a **nasal spray**. Both forms work very well when used correctly.

What is the difference between naloxone and Narcan®?

Naloxone is the medication that reverses the overdose. Narcan® is one commonly-used brand name for naloxone in nasal spray form.

Why should I carry naloxone?

In 2022, there were over 2,250 reported overdoses reversed in Maine by community members using naloxone. Many people use substances for many reasons, often without their friends and family knowing. Most overdoses are accidental and unexpected. Having naloxone in your first aid kit could allow you to save a life.

🕒 When and How to Use Naloxone

How do I know if I should give someone naloxone?

What are the signs of an opioid overdose?

Give naloxone to anyone who looks like they are having an opioid overdose. It can be hard to know for sure, so it is best to assume it is an overdose. Signs of an opioid overdose include:

- » Slow or irregular breathing
- » Unresponsive or passed-out
- » Blue or purple lips or fingernails
- » Pinpoint-sized pupils
- » Does not respond to touch or sternum rub
- » Pale, clammy skin
- » Slow or irregular heartbeat

How do you know if naloxone is working?

You will know if the naloxone is working when the person starts breathing again. They may still be groggy. Stay with the person until EMS arrives.

How do I give intranasal (nasal spray) naloxone?

Naloxone nasal spray is a pre-filled, needle-free device that is easy to use. Watch a video on [KnowYourOptions.ME/get-naloxone](https://www.knowyouroptions.org/get-naloxone), download the OD-ME mobile app, or attend a training to learn more. There are also instructions with the box. Steps:

- » Put the person on their back or tilt their head back and spray into one nostril.
- » Watch the person to make sure they begin breathing within a few minutes. A person may need more than one dose of naloxone if they do not begin breathing.
- » Give more and start rescue breathing if needed.
- » Call 9-1-1 to get emergency medical services (EMS).

Naloxone: Have it on Hand Frequently Asked Questions

To give rescue breathing:

1. Put the person flat on their back.
2. Gently tilt back their head. Pinch their nose.
3. Give two quick breaths in their mouth. Chest should move (stomach should not move).
4. Give one slow breath every five seconds until they start breathing regularly.
5. If there is no response in three minutes, give another dose of naloxone every three minutes until the person regains consciousness or emergency medical services arrive.

If trained, perform CPR if the person is still not breathing and their pulse has stopped.

How do I use intramuscular (IM) naloxone?

IM naloxone is easy to use, inexpensive, and can work faster than intranasal naloxone. A package of IM naloxone has two vials of medicine, two needles, alcohol pads, and instructions. Steps to use:

- » Take the cap off the vial.
- » Insert needle into the vial, turn upside down, and pull plunger to fill the needle with all liquid.
- » Insert the entire amount of medicine into one of these muscles: shoulder, upper buttocks, or front/outer thigh.
- » Watch the person to make sure they begin breathing within a few minutes. It will take about two to three minutes for the naloxone to kick in. Repeat in 3 minutes if the person is not breathing.

Is it possible for someone to need more than one dose of naloxone? How much naloxone is too much?

Yes, a person may need several doses of naloxone. Naloxone should be given every 2 to 3 minutes until an individual is revived and breathing again, first responders arrive, or you run out of naloxone. An individual cannot be given too much naloxone.

Will naloxone work on overdoses caused by substances other than opioids?

Naloxone only reverses the effects of opioids. However, if a person is experiencing an overdose, fentanyl and other opioids are likely in the mix. Using naloxone does not harm people if they don't have opioids in their system; it can only help.

Should you continue to give naloxone to someone if they've woken up, but still seem under the influence?

No. Naloxone is only used to reverse an opioid overdose. Once a person is breathing normally, you should not give them more naloxone unless they go back into an overdose. However, because a person can overdose again once the naloxone wears off (after 30 to 90 minutes), stay with them until first responders arrive.

Should you also call 9-1-1 when giving naloxone?

Yes. You should always call 9-1-1 if you believe someone is experiencing an overdose. First responders can walk you through important steps to keep the person safe until they arrive.

How long does naloxone stay in the body?

Naloxone stays in your body between 30 to 90 minutes. Opioids can stay in your system much longer, so stay with the person until EMS arrives.

What should I do after I give naloxone?

After you give naloxone to a person, stay with them until EMS arrives. If the person does not want help from EMS, encourage them to be around others for several hours in case they overdose again. Learn more about Maine's Good Samaritan Law, which legally protects a person experiencing an overdose and the people providing aid, at KnowYourOptions.ME.

ⓘ Precautions & Potential Dangers

Will naloxone give the person an adrenaline rush (surge of energy)?

No, naloxone will not give an adrenaline rush. It is normal for a person to feel uncomfortable or confused when they first start to breathe again.

Is naloxone a danger to children?

Naloxone will have no effect on children (or adults) if opioids are not in their system. It is not dangerous.

How old do you have to be to carry naloxone?

There is no minimum age requirement for carrying naloxone.

ⓘ Common Misconceptions

Does naloxone encourage people to use substances?

Reducing the risk of overdose does not encourage people to use more. Harm reduction is critical in order to keep people safe and alive. No one deserves to die from addiction. Engaging with harm reduction providers actually makes people more likely to seek support and to stop using substances (U.S. CDC).

If people use other drugs, but not opioids, do we need naloxone?

Yes, keep naloxone on hand. The drug supply is unpredictable, and fentanyl has been found in many drugs, including stimulants or "uppers." To reduce the risk of overdose, use safer practices like testing with fentanyl test strips and using with other people around and with naloxone on hand. Find more about safer use at KnowYourOptions.ME.

ⓘ Accessing & Storing Naloxone

Where can I obtain naloxone in Maine?

- » **Pharmacies** (without prescription): In Maine, you do not need a prescription to buy nasal spray naloxone. You can visit your local pharmacy and ask the pharmacist for naloxone. A kit can cost up to \$150 without insurance.
- » Ask your **doctor** for a prescription: Whenever you're prescribed an opioid, you can ask for a naloxone prescription. Accidental overdose can happen to anyone taking an opioid, whether occasionally, regularly, or for the first time. Naloxone is free for MaineCare patients with a prescription.
- » **OPTIONS Liaisons**: Through the State of Maine's OPTIONS initiative, each county has a Liaison who can connect people to resources and provide naloxone. Learn more: KnowYourOptions.ME.

- » **Maine Naloxone Distribution Initiative** or Tier 1 distributors: a network of community distributors across Maine provide naloxone for free, alongside overdose prevention education and naloxone training. These distributors are known as Tier 1s and play a critical role in distributing naloxone to people who use drugs, their loved ones, communities, and organizations. To contact one of these distributors, see below or visit GetMaineNaloxone.Org.

- Bangor Public Health & Community Services (Penobscot, Piscataquis, Aroostook, Hancock, Washington): Call/text 207-992-4461 or email denise.smith@bangormaine.gov
- Maine Access Points (Statewide): Call/text 207-370-9445 or email info@maineaccesspoints.org
- MaineGeneral Harm Reduction (Oxford, Franklin, Somerset, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc, Kennebec, Waldo, Lincoln, Knox): Call 207-872-4102
- Portland Public Health (Cumberland and York): Call 207-756-8022 or email kbarton@portlandmaine.gov

Who pays for the naloxone being distributed in Maine?

In response to Governor Janet Mills' *Executive Order 2: An Order to Implement Immediate Responses to Maine's Opioid Epidemic* in 2019, the Office of Behavioral Health and the Office of the Attorney General provide funding for naloxone purchase and distribution in Maine.

Does insurance cover naloxone?

Many insurance plans, including MaineCare, cover naloxone prescriptions. Check with your insurance provider.

How do I store naloxone?

Follow the manufacturer's storage instructions. If instructions are not available, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends keeping naloxone in the original box or storage container, protected from light, and stored at room temperature (59-77°F or 15-25°C) until ready for use.

Does naloxone expire? Can it be used if expired?

Naloxone has an expiration date on the box. You can check with a local naloxone distributor to trade in naloxone that is nearing its expiration date. Find them at GetMaineNaloxone.org. If you only have expired naloxone during an overdose emergency, it is best to give the expired naloxone than not give any at all.

Can I keep naloxone in my car? Will the summer heat or winter cold affect it?

Naloxone should be stored at room temperature. It can withstand temperatures up to 107 degrees Fahrenheit and still be effective, but not for long periods of time. It can freeze, and still be effective after it thaws, but cannot be used while it is frozen. Avoid permanently storing naloxone in your car. It is okay if you have left it in your car overnight or during the day and then take it out. Keeping it in your trunk or glove box may be better.



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