

# Response and Prevention of Opioid Overdose



Opioid use disorder (OUD) is a medical condition that can affect anyone – regardless of race, gender, income level, or social class. In this November 2022 CDC National Center for Health Statistics release,\* over 5,000 people ages 65 and over in the U.S. died of a drug overdose in 2020. Preparing to respond to a person who is having an opioid overdose or adverse opioid reaction can save lives.

## ORGANIZATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

- Create policy and processes for opioid prescribing and adverse reaction response
- Conduct a risk assessment to identify those at highest risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose
- Adhere to evidence-based opioid prescribing practices
- Ensure naloxone is readily available
- Obtain standing orders to administer naloxone as needed for any patient on an opioid medication
- Confirm staff readiness by:
  - Training staff to recognize and communicate the signs and symptoms of opioid adverse medication reactions as well as the value of immediate response
  - Training staff on how and when to administer naloxone
  - Addressing stigma and health equity
  - Training staff during orientation and at least annually
- Track and analyze adverse drug events related to high-risk medications
- Perform quality improvement activities driven by data

## NARCAN (NALOXONE) NASAL SPRAY VS. INJECTION (IM)

### Naloxone Nasal Spray

- ✔ Can be administered by anyone and is easier to administer, potentially getting the dose to the patient faster
- ✔ Reduces risk for needle stick in a stressful emergency
- ✔ Potential need for re-dose
- ✔ Formulation's time to max concentration is 20-30 minutes

### Naloxone Intramuscular Injection (IM)

- ✔ Requires licensed personnel to administer
- ✔ May be slightly more effective than nasal spray
- ✔ Less likely need to be re-dosed
- ✔ Formulation's time to max concentration is 15-20 minutes

Overall, the CDC has no preference. Both products are effective in reversing opioid overdoses.



Scan to learn more about naloxone resources and adverse drug events.

*This material was prepared by Telligen, a Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of CMS or HHS, and any reference to a specific product or entity herein does not constitute endorsement of that product or entity by CMS or HHS. This material is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice; it is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. 12SOW-QIN-09/04/24-5448*

*Photo: Narcan Nasal Spray Photo Courtesy of <https://adaa.uw.edu/news-u-s-fda-approves-narcan-4mg-naloxone-nasal-spray-for-over-the-counter-purchase-use/>  
\*[https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs\\_press\\_releases/2022/20221130.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2022/20221130.htm)*

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