

# MAXIMISING OPIOID SAFETY

## Keeping naloxone in your home could save a life



### Why are we talking about **opioid safety**?

- Opioid pain medicines are prescribed to help with pain, but it's important to know about their risks
- In Australia, 75 people are hospitalised and 2 people die every day from prescribed opioids, but these are mostly preventable
- You can take simple steps to reduce your risks

Common prescribed opioids include:

Codeine  
Oxycodone  
Morphine

Tapentadol  
Fentanyl  
Buprenorphine

### Why should I have **naloxone** at home?

- Naloxone **reverses the effects of opioids** if you or someone else has a severe reaction
- It's safe - even if accidentally given to someone who has not taken opioids
- In case of an emergency, you or someone else (e.g. a family member or carer) can administer naloxone while waiting for an ambulance – **this could save a life**



Keep **naloxone** in your home as a part of your opioid safety plan

### What are the most severe opioid-related risks?

- Severe reactions (*loss of consciousness, slowed breathing*) can be fatal
- This is sometimes called 'overdose' even when it happens from taking your prescribed dose
- Severe reactions are quite common, and can sometimes happen even when you follow the directions - that's why it's important to be prepared

### What increases opioid-related risk?



**Taking extra medicine**  
(e.g. for worse pain)



**A mix-up with your medicines**  
(e.g. accidentally doubling up)



**Combining with alcohol or other medicines**  
(e.g. sleeping pills or other pain medicines)



**Other changes in your health**  
(e.g. with your liver, kidneys, or lungs)



**Someone else taking your opioid pain medicine**



Naloxone is available as a **nasal spray** or **injection**



Naloxone is available at your pharmacy.  
**Ask your pharmacist today**

# OPIOID SAFETY PLAN

Share this plan with your family, friends or carer



## MAKE A PLAN

- ☐ Keep naloxone in an accessible place at home.
- ☐ Ensure that others in your home know what naloxone is used for, where it is kept, and how to use it
- ☐ Familiarise yourself and others with the symptoms to look out for

*My naloxone is kept:*



.....  
(location)

## REDUCE YOUR RISK



Do not mix opioids with alcohol or other sedative medicines



Always stick to your prescribed dose



Use strategies to remember when you have taken your medicines (e.g. *webster packs*, marking off on a calendar)



Stick to the same doctor and pharmacist for your treatment



Ask your pharmacist or doctor about other ways of managing pain

## RESPOND

### RECOGNISE SYMPTOMS

Many deaths can be easily prevented if people know what they are looking for



Being extremely drowsy/very hard to wake up (like a deep sleep) or being slumped over



Snoring or gurgling can be a sign of someone struggling to breathe because of opioids



A blue tinge to the lips or nails



Pinpoint pupils



Being cold and clammy

### IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

**1**

**Call an ambulance (000)**

**2**

**Administer naloxone**

***Spray one dose into the nostril***

*If using the injection, inject one dose into the outer shoulder or thigh muscle*

***Note the time of administration***

*If no response after 2-3 minutes, repeat the dose*

**3**

**Place in the recovery position, and stay until help arrives**