

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)

Administer naloxone

2

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