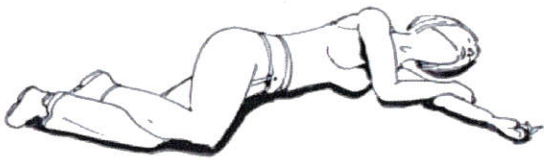
praxis
Training for Massachusetts Addiction Professionals

Opioid Overdose Prevention

Overdose Response

- Recognize overdose
- Call 911
- Administer Narcan as soon as available
- Begin rescue breathing or CPR as trained
- Place person in the Recovery Position if they are breathing on their own
- Stay with the person until help arrives



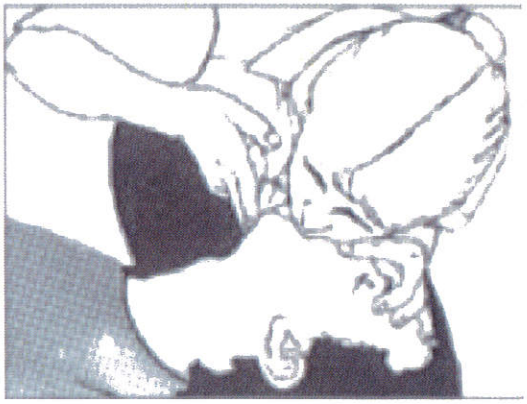
Recovery Position

The recovery position is used if a person is unconscious, vomiting, or in danger of choking on vomit or saliva. Place the person on their side, with legs bent, and head resting on the arm on the floor. The recovery position lets fluid drain from the person's mouth so they do not choke. Place the person in the recovery position whenever you are not doing rescue breathing.

Rescue Breathing

Rescue breathing means you are breathing for someone unable to breathe on his or her own. If someone is not breathing or only breathing a few times per minute, you must start rescue breathing immediately.

1. Place the person on their back with head tilted back and chin lifted (1 hand on forehead and 1 under their chin).
2. Pinch their nose shut and breathe into their mouth 2 times (normal breaths).
3. Check to make sure their chest is rising. If not, lift chin a little higher and be sure nose is pinched shut.
4. Give 1 full breath every 5 seconds (count: 1-1,000, 2-1,000, 3-1,000, 4-1,000. Take a breath after 4-1,000 and give another breath on 5-1,000). If available, use a sterile barrier during rescue breathing.
5. Continue for 12 breaths (1 minute) and recheck breathing.
6. If still no breathing, give Naloxone (see HOW TO USE NALOXONE). Stay with person. Make sure he/she is positioned safely.
7. If still no breathing, continue rescue breathing for 3 minutes (36 breaths). If still no response, give another dose of Naloxone.
8. Continue rescue breathing until the person responds or until EMS arrives.



Rescue Breathing

Image used with permission of Harm Reduction Coalition

What are Opioids?

Opioids are drugs used to control moderate to severe pain. They include morphine, codeine, OxyContin®, Percocet®, Darvon®, Vicodin®, and many other prescription pain medications, as well as heroin and methadone.

What are the risks with using opioids?

Opioids cause drowsiness and a decrease in breathing rate. Taking too high a dose or mixing opioids with other depressant drugs or alcohol depresses breathing, which may become very slow or stop all together. Depression of breathing leads to a lack of oxygen. Opioid overdose deaths happen as a result of the lack of oxygen.

Signs of Overdose

1. Unconscious or unresponsive (no response to shouting or shaking)
2. Pale, blue or grayish lips, face, and nail beds (from lack of oxygen)
3. Slow, shallow, or raspy or gurgling breath, snoring or no detectable breathing
4. Pinpoint pupils

OVERDOSE IS AN EMERGENCY!
CALL 911! IT MAY BE THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THE PERSON'S LIFE!

Drug	Duration	Potency
Methadone	24-32 hours	****
Heroin	6-8 hours	*****
Oxycontin	3-6 hours	*****
Codeine	3-4 hours	*
Demerol	2-4 hours	**
Morphine	3-6 hours	***
Fentanyl	2-4 hours	*****

Remember: Naloxone life in the body is only 30-90 MINUTES