

The red line does not print.  
It is to show you where to cut.

what are opioids

### What are opioids?<sup>3</sup>

Opioids are a class of drugs commonly used to reduce pain.

Opioids bind to specific receptors in the brain that reduce the transmission of pain signals throughout the body. Opioids include:

- heroin
- prescription pain medications such as:
  - hydrocodone (Vicodin)
  - hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
  - meperidine (Demerol)
  - morphine (MS Contin)
  - oxycodone (OxyContin, Percocet)
  - codeine
  - fentanyl
  - methadone

### What can cause an overdose?<sup>3</sup>

When levels of opioids are too high in his or her system, a person can lose consciousness and stop breathing – this is an overdose. An opioid overdose can happen suddenly or come on slowly over a few hours. Without oxygen, a person can die.

Risks for an opioid overdose include:

- Using opioids again after your tolerance has dropped. After a break from opioids, the body cannot handle as much as it did before.
- Taking prescription pain medication more often or in higher doses than prescribed- or using someone else’s prescription pain medication.
- Using heroin or pills bought on the street. Heroin and street pills often contain other substances that can be dangerously toxic.
- Using opioids with alcohol or other drugs including sleeping pills, benzodiazepines, cocaine and methamphetamine.
- Any current or chronic illness that weakens the heart or makes it harder to breathe.
- Previous overdose. A person who has overdosed before is more likely to overdose again.



### Who is at risk?<sup>2</sup>

Anyone who uses opioids for long-term pain management is at risk for opioid overdose. So are people who use heroin.

Others at risk include persons:

- Receiving rotating opioid medication regimens.
- Discharged from emergency medical care following opioid intoxication or poisoning.

**Overdose rates in Indian Country are nearly triple the rate of any other community in Washington.<sup>1</sup>**

**Opioids are a leading cause of injury-related deaths in our state.<sup>1</sup>**

**75 percent of opioid misuse starts with people using medication that was not prescribed for them - usually taken from a friend or family member.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Source: Washington State Department of Health  
<sup>2</sup>Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
<sup>3</sup>Source: Stopoverdose.org

The yellow line does not print.  
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overdose symptoms

## Stop opioid abuse

- ✓ If you are prescribed an opioid, talk with your doctor about other options.
- ✓ Never share an opioid prescription with someone else.
- ✓ Dispose of unused medications safely.
- ✓ Talk to your kids about the risks of opioid abuse.
- ✓ Kids are 50 percent less likely to use drugs when parents tell them about the risks.
- ✓ Lock up your medications.

Learn more at  
[WATribalOpioidSolutions.com](http://WATribalOpioidSolutions.com)

## What are the symptoms of an overdose?<sup>2</sup>

- The face is extremely pale and/or clammy to the touch.
- The body is limp.
- The person is vomiting or making gurgling noises.
- The person cannot be awakened from sleep or is unable to speak.
- The person's breathing is very slow or stopped.

## Signs of overmedication which may progress to overdose include:<sup>2</sup>

- Mental confusion, slurred speech, or intoxicated behavior.
- Extremely small "pinpoint" pupils.
- Difficulty in being awakened from sleep.

An opioid overdose requires immediate medical attention. An essential first step is to get help from someone with medical expertise as soon as possible. Call 911 immediately if you or someone you know exhibits any of the symptoms listed above. All you have to say is, "Someone is unresponsive and not breathing." Give a clear address and/or description of your location.



opioid  
overdose

## What is Naloxone?<sup>3</sup>

Naloxone is a prescription medicine that temporarily stops the effect of opioids. This helps a person start breathing again and wake up from an opioid overdose. Naloxone (the generic name) is also sold under the brand names Narcan® and Evzio®.

### Naloxone

- Only works on opioids. It has no effect on someone who has not taken opioids.
- Cannot be used to get high and is not addictive.
- Has a long safety history. Adverse side effects are rare.
- Can be easily and safely administered by laypersons.

journey  
to recovery