

**We can
prevent
drug
deaths**

#
**STOP THE
DEATHS**

**We just
need to
know how**

www.stopthedeaths.com

**HOW TO SAVE
A LIFE**

1. Recognise the signs of
an overdose

2. Call 999

3. Carry Naloxone



www.stootherdeaths.com

Visit the How To Save a Life website. This site hosts the information in this booklet.



Scottish Drugs Forum,
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www.sdf.org.uk
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Drug-Related Deaths in Scotland

Scotland has seen a significant rise in drug-related deaths since 2013.

Each year since 2018 over 1000 people have died from a drugs overdose.

Scotland has the highest rate of drug-related deaths in Europe.

This is a public health emergency, and the Scottish Government has announced a National Mission to reduce drug deaths and harms.

Almost all fatal drugs overdoses involve more than one kind of drug. But opiates and opioids - drugs like heroin and medications like tramadol, codeine and methadone - are involved in the vast majority of deaths.

To help save lives, any person who appears to be experiencing an overdose should be treated as if they have taken opiates or opioids and are at risk of dying without prompt action being taken.

What is an Overdose?

An overdose happens when drugs like opiates switch off the vital signal from the brain to the lungs. This means the person can't breathe properly and may stop breathing completely.

If not treated quickly this can lead to brain injury and death.

WOULD YOU RECOGNISE THE SIGNS OF AN **OVERDOSE**?



STOP THE DEATHS

IF A PERSON IS UNRESPONSIVE
AND HAS ANY OTHER SIGNS CALL 999



IMPORTANT



WE CAN PREVENT DRUG DEATHS. WE JUST NEED TO KNOW HOW.

SNORING



SHALLOW BREATHING



PALE SKIN



BLUE LIPS



PINPOINT PUPILS



CARRY NALOXONE

NALOXONE REVERSES THE EFFECTS OF OPIOIDS, IT CAN HELP SAVE LIVES



SDF
Scottish Drugs
Forum

Recognise the Signs of an Overdose

When someone is experiencing an overdose, they are:

01. **UNCONSCIOUS and UNRESPONSIVE**



When you try to wake them, by shaking their shoulders or shouting to them, they will not respond by speaking to you, opening their eyes, or moving in any way.

This is different from being heavily under the influence of drugs where the person may be extremely drowsy, slurring their speech and unsteady in their movements.

Naloxone should **NOT** be given to someone who is **RESPONSIVE**.

04.

Signs of an Overdose

02.

SHALLOW BREATHING



Shallow breathing means their breaths can be reduced to 3-4 breaths per minute instead of the usual 12-20 breaths. A person who has an overdose may stop breathing completely.

03.

RASPING BREATH or SNORING



Rasping breathing or snoring is sometimes mistaken for a person being asleep.

However, it can often be a sign that the person is experiencing an overdose, and their airway is being restricted.

04.

PALE SKIN



During an overdose the person's skin may be pale or ashen and the person may also feel cold or sweaty to touch.

05.

Signs of an Overdose

05.

BLUE LIPS



When someone is experiencing an overdose their lips, or fingertips, may turn blue due to the lack of oxygen in the blood.

06.

PINPOINT PUPILS



Pinpoint pupils may indicate that the person has had an opiate overdose because these drugs make the pupils appear very small. Other drugs may dilate your pupils, making them bigger. So, the size of the pupils is not always a guide to what drugs the person may have overdosed on.



Call 999

If someone is unresponsive and has any signs of an overdose you should:

- Call 999 informing them this could be an overdose
- Follow the instructions of the call handler
- Stay with the person until an ambulance arrives

06.

Things which increase risk of overdose are:



Low tolerance following a period of not using or being new to using certain drugs



Polydrug use using more than one drug, even if days apart, can still have an effect in the body



Using alone increases your chances of dying as no one is there to intervene if help is needed

Overdose Risk Factors

Overdose Risk Times

Any big change in a person's circumstances can be a risky time for overdose especially when these changes are unplanned or unexpected.

Leaving a residential service such as prison, hospital or rehab

Significant life events such as losing a loved one or a relationship breakdown.

Starting or **ending a prescription,** particularly for Opioids such as methadone or buprenorphine.

What Drugs are Common in Overdose?

Fatal overdoses usually involve more than one of these drugs.

Opioids*

- Heroin, methadone, tramadol, codeine
-

Benzodiazepines*

- Commonly called Benzos or “Vallies”
-

Gabapentinoids*

- Also called ‘Gabapentin’, ‘Pregabalin’ or ‘Gabbas’
-

Alcohol*

Cocaine

*Central nervous system (CNS) depressants

What do CNS Depressants do?

Depressants (downers) slow down the basic life support functions of the body.

Central Nervous System depressants can:

- Reduce breathing
- Slow down heart rate
- Lower temperature
- Dull pain
- Affect memory
- Cause drowsiness
- Slur speech

These drugs can lead to a person stopping breathing and dying from a lack of oxygen.

Without intervention these effects can lead to unconsciousness and death

What is Naloxone?

Naloxone is a safe and easy to use medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of opioid drugs like heroin, morphine, codeine, tramadol, fentanyl, methadone, and buprenorphine.

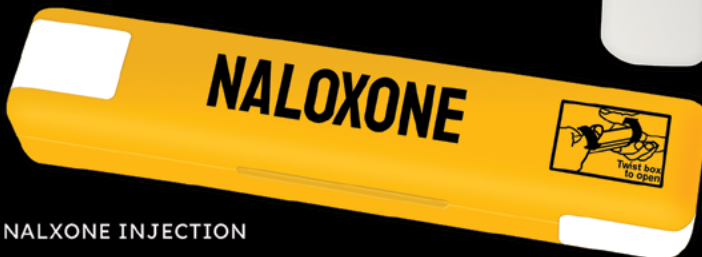
Opioids attach to receptors in the brain and switch off the vital signal from the brain to the lungs. Naloxone works by knocking the opioids off the receptors and replacing them to create an effective barrier. This allows the signal from the brain to reach the lungs, and the person can breathe again.

In Scotland, naloxone kits come as either:

- A pre-filled syringe for intra-muscular injection (injected into the thigh or upper arm)
- An intra-nasal spray (sprayed up the nostril)



INTRA-NASAL SPRAY



NALOXONE INJECTION

How to get Naloxone



www.sfad.org.uk

Anyone in Scotland aged 16 and over can request a free naloxone injection kit, and anyone aged 14 and over can request a free naloxone nasal kit - please note, supply of injection and nasal kits requires mandatory training in their usage.

In the UK it is legal for anyone to administer naloxone for the purpose of saving a life, regardless of whether they have had training.

Naloxone is widely available mainly via drug services and pharmacies. This may differ slightly from area to area.

If you reside in Scotland, you can request a naloxone kit through the Click and Deliver service established through Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs.

www.sfad.org.uk

12.

Administering Naloxone

Using Intramuscular Injection:

NALOXONE

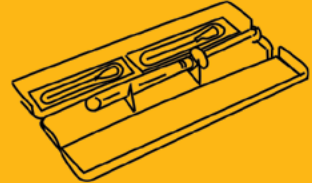


1.



Remove the clear film wrapping and twist the outer plastic box to break the tamper evident seals and open.

2.



The box contains 1 syringe of Prenoxad Injection, two needles and a patient leaflet.

3.



Unscrew the clear plastic top from the syringe.

4.



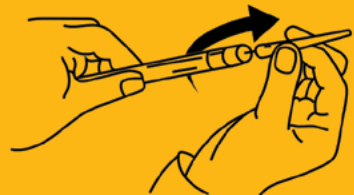
Peel back the backing paper from the needle packet and remove the needle in its protective sheath.

5.



With the needle still in its sheath, screw the blue fitting onto the syringe.

6.



Gently twist the needle sheath and remove it from the syringe.

7.



To inject someone who has overdosed, hold the syringe like a pen.

8.



Insert the needle into the patient's outer thigh or upper arm, through clothing if necessary, and inject first dose (0.4ml). Withdraw the needle and syringe after each dose.

Administering Naloxone



Using intranasal:

1.



Peel off the back of the Nyxoid container. Remove the nasal spray and place it within easy reach.

2.



Lay the person on their back. Support the back of the neck, and let the head tilt back. Clear away anything you see blocking their nose.

3.



! Don't press yet

Hold the spray as shown - first two fingers either side of the nozzle, thumb ready to push the plunger.

! Don't press to prime or test before use.

4.



Gently insert the spray nozzle into one nostril. Press firmly on the plunger until it clicks and gives the dose. Remove the nozzle from the nostril.

If possible, note which nostril you used.

14.

Recovery Position

1. Lift Arm

Place nearest arm at right angle to body, with arm bent.



2. Support Face

Bring other arm across chest. Place back of person's hand against cheek.



3. Lift Leg

- Grasp far leg just above knee
- Lift knee
- Roll person towards you, onto their side
- Support head, keeping back of hand against cheek



4. Roll Over

- Final Position
- Hand supports head
 - Top leg bent at hip and knee



Monitor & Support

Stay with the person until the ambulance arrives

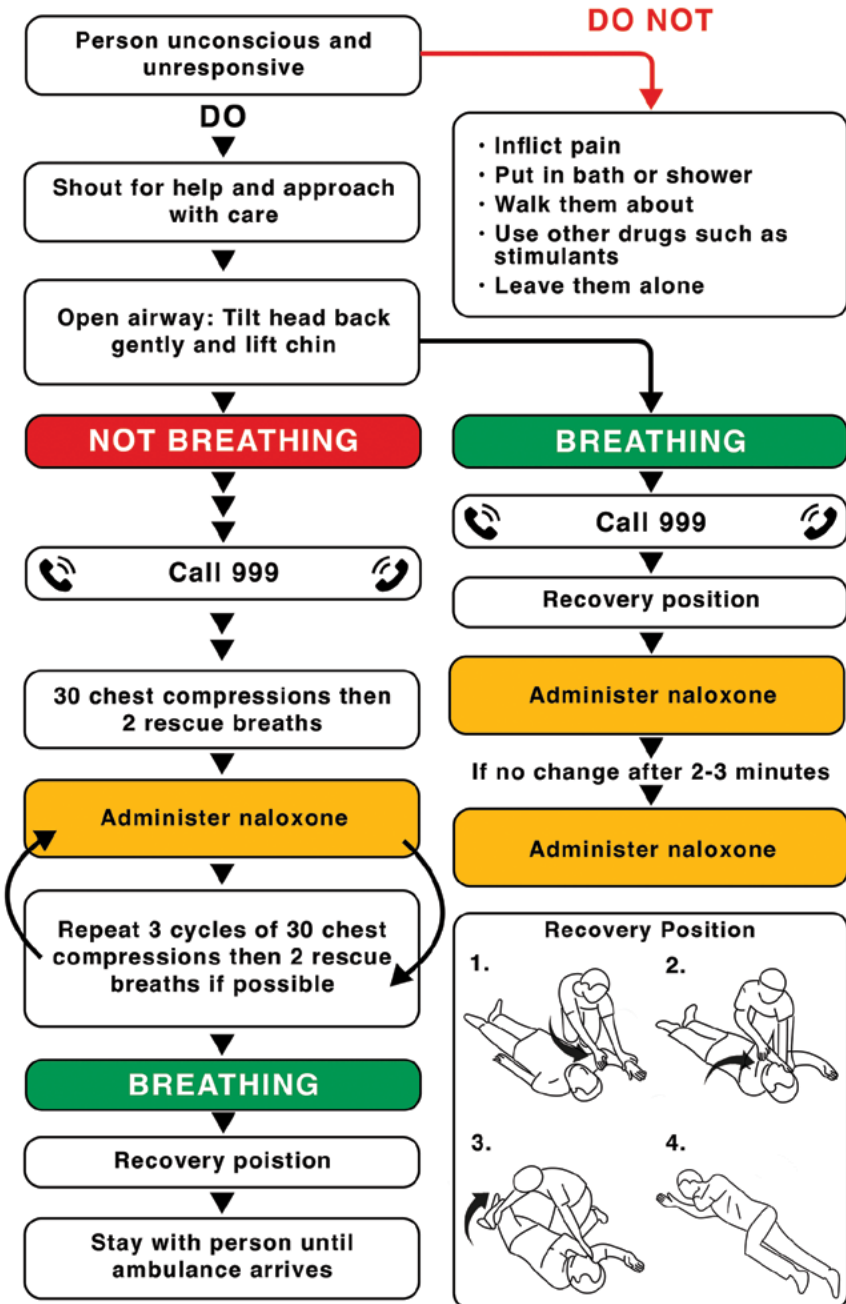
If the person has regained consciousness tell them what has happened and reassure them that help is on the way. Encourage the person to stay until the ambulance service has arrived.

If they feel any withdrawal symptoms (if a person is opiate dependant, they may feel unwell after being given naloxone) you can reassure them they will feel better when the naloxone starts to wear off.

No other substances should be taken at this time.

When the ambulance service arrive, inform them of the situation, hand over the used naloxone kit and request a resupply of naloxone.

Responding to an overdose



Follow up

After providing help to someone who has overdosed

After you have administered naloxone, you may need to discuss this experience with someone – a trusted family member, friend, neighbour, or colleague.

Samaritans – call free 116 123
www.samaritans.org/

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs (SFAD)- 08080 10 10 11
www.sfad.org.uk/

Breathing Space – 0800 838587 –
www.breathingspace.scot/

Remember to get a resupply of naloxone if you were not issued one.

Quick Reference

- 1. Check for signs of overdose**
A person is unresponsive and has any other signs like: Snoring, Shallow Breathing, Pale Skin, Blue Lips or Pinpoint Pupils

- 2. Call an ambulance**



- 3. Administer naloxone**



- 4. Recovery position**



- 5. Monitor and give support until the ambulance arrives**

- 6. Give second dose of naloxone -**
if no improvement after 2-3 minutes OR
overdose symptoms return



- 7. Take care for your personal safety**

- 8. Dispose of used naloxone and get a replacement**



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