

# SAMHSA

# Opioid Overdose Prevention

# TOOLKIT:

Recovering From Opioid Overdose –  
*Resources for Overdose  
Survivors & Family Members*





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***Also see the other components of this Toolkit:***

- Facts for Community Members
- Five Essential Steps for First Responders
- Information for Prescribers
- Safety Advice for Patients & Family Members

# RECOVERING FROM OPIOID OVERDOSE

## RESOURCES FOR OVERDOSE SURVIVORS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

**S**urvivors of opioid overdose have experienced a life-changing and traumatic event. They have had to deal with the emotional consequences of overdosing, which can involve embarrassment, guilt, anger, and gratitude, all accompanied by the discomfort of opioid withdrawal. Most need the support of family and friends to take the next steps toward recovery.

While many factors can contribute to opioid overdose, it is almost always an accident. Moreover, the underlying problem that led to opioid use—most often pain or substance use disorder—still exists and continues to require attention.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the individual who has experienced an overdose is not the only one who has endured a traumatic event. Family members often feel judged or inadequate because they could not prevent the overdose. It is important for family members to work together to help the overdose survivor obtain the help that he or she needs.

## FINDING A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

As with any disease, it is not a sign of weakness to admit that a person or a family cannot deal with the trauma of overdose without help. It takes real courage to reach out to others for support and to connect with members of the community to get help.

Health care providers, including those who specialize in treating substance use disorders, can provide structured, therapeutic support and feedback.

If the survivor's underlying problem is pain, referral to a pain specialist may be in order. If it is addiction, the patient should be referred to an addiction specialist for assessment and treatment, either by a physician specializing in the treatment of opioid addiction, in a residential treatment program, or in a federally certified Opioid Treatment Program (OTP). In each case, counseling can help the individual manage his or her problems in a healthier way. Choosing the path to recovery can be a dynamic and challenging process, but there are ways to help.

In addition to receiving support from family and friends, overdose survivors can access a variety of community-based organizations and institutions, such as:

- Health care and behavioral health providers.
- Peer-to-peer recovery support groups such as Narcotics Anonymous.
- Faith-based organizations.
- Educational institutions.
- Neighborhood groups.
- Government agencies.
- Family and community support programs.

# RECOVERING FROM OPIOID OVERDOSE

## RESOURCES

Information on opioid overdose and helpful advice for overdose survivors and their families can be found at:

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

- National Helpline 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD—for hearing impaired)
- Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov> to search by address, city, or zip code
- Buprenorphine Treatment Physician Locator: <http://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment/physician-program-data/treatment-physician-locator>
- State Substance Abuse Agencies: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/TreatmentLocator/faces/about.jspx>

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):**

<http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/epidemic>

### **National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Center for Biotechnical Information:**

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>

### **Partnership for Drug-Free Kids:**

<http://www.drugfree.org/join-together/opioid-overdose-antidote-being-more-widely-distributed-to-those-who-use-drugs>

### **Project Lazarus:**

<http://www.projectlazarus.org>

### **Harm Reduction Coalition:**

<http://www.harmreduction.org>

### **Overdose Prevention Alliance:**

<http://www.overdosepreventionalliance.org>

### **Toward the Heart:**

<http://www.towardtheheart.com/naloxne>

# REFERENCES

## References

<sup>1</sup> Beletsky LB, Rich JD, Walley AY. Prevention of fatal opioid overdose. *JAMA*. 2012;308(18):1863-1864.

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