

naloxone information

what is naloxone?

Naloxone is a type of medicine which temporarily reverses the effects of opioid overdose. It lasts between 30 and 90 minutes, allowing the person to breathe again while the ambulance is on its way. Naloxone has no effect other than this action. It cannot be misused to get high.

how is naloxone supplied?

Naloxone is available in single-dose ampoules or in a prefilled five-dose syringe. Naloxone can be prescribed by a doctor and is also available directly from a pharmacist. It is cheaper to get it on prescription and this will also allow you to speak to a doctor if you have any concerns about your health or drug use.



how should naloxone be stored?

Manufacturers recommend that it is stored below 25 degrees. But you should always carry it with you if there's a chance you might use – and make sure anyone with you knows when and how to use it too.

what is the shelf-life of naloxone?

Naloxone has a shelf-life of approximately two years. An expiry date can be found on the packaging of the prefilled syringe or on the ampoule. A person should ask a doctor for a repeat script, or purchase new naloxone over the counter at a pharmacy before the expiry date. Expired naloxone will not hurt the individual but does not work as well as new naloxone.

how is it administered?

Naloxone is injected into a muscle in the upper arm or outer thigh. A second dose should be provided 2–3 minutes later if there is still no response.

can naloxone wear off before the drugs that caused the overdose?

Yes. Naloxone usually wears off in 30 to 90 minutes, and when this happens the person can stop breathing again unless more naloxone is available. This is especially the case if they have taken other depressant drugs as well as the opioids (such as alcohol or benzodiazepines). It is vitally important that an ambulance is called so that professional medical help is on the way.

If someone is given naloxone they should not be left alone and should be discouraged from using any drugs for at least two hours.

are there risks associated with naloxone use?

There are very few risks associated with naloxone use. A very small number of people have hypersensitivity to naloxone.

who can carry or administer naloxone?

It is legal for a person to carry naloxone that is prescribed or dispensed to them. Naloxone is not a controlled drug and has no potential for abuse. It is legal for a non-medical person to administer naloxone to someone else to treat a potentially fatal overdose.

For more information, contact Penington Institute on 03 9650 0699 or visit penington.org.au

