

DEPRESSANTS

31 AUGUST

—
INTERNATIONAL
OVERDOSE
AWARENESS DAY

WHAT ARE DEPRESSANTS?

Benzodiazepines, barbiturates (medical depressants), and alcohol all slow the central nervous system to produce a calming effect.

These substances are often prescribed to relieve pain, help you sleep or in the case of alcohol, used recreationally when socialising. However, when taken in excessive amounts or in combinations with other drugs, depressants can depress normal functions such as breathing and heart rate until they eventually stop, resulting in brain damage or death.

SIGNS OF OVERDOSE

- Vomiting
- Unresponsive, but awake
- Limp body
- Pale and/or clammy face
- Blue fingernails or lips
- Shallow or erratic breathing, or not breathing at all
- Slow or erratic pulse (heartbeat)
- Choking or sounds of a gurgling noise
- Loss of consciousness

OVERDOSE RESPONSE

Call an ambulance, tell the operator your location, and stay on the line.

Be prepared to give CPR if they stop breathing before an ambulance arrives.

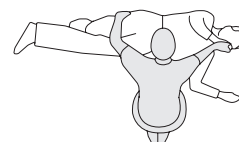
Ensure the person has adequate air by keeping crowds back or opening windows. Loosen tight clothing.

If the person is unconscious or wants to lie down, put them in the recovery position and continue to monitor them.

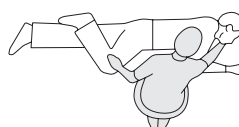
Provide paramedics with as much information as possible, such as what, and how much of the drug was taken, how long ago and any pre-existing medical conditions. If the drug came in a bottle or packet, give the packaging to the ambulance officers.

The Recovery Position

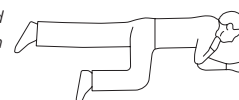
Support face Place the arm nearest to you at right angles to the body. Place their other hand against their cheek.



Lift leg Get hold of the far leg just above the knee and pull it up, keeping the foot flat on the ground.



Roll over Keep their hand pressed against their cheek and pull on the upper leg to roll them towards you and onto their side.



WHAT NOT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A SUSPECTED OVERDOSE

- Do **NOT** ignore snoring or gurgling: This could mean someone is having trouble breathing.
- Do **NOT** leave the person alone.
- Do **NOT** give the person anything to eat or drink, or try to induce vomiting.