

**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF DRUG AND  
ALCOHOL PROGRAMS



**Friends and Family  
Naloxone Guide**

September 2016

# Individuals Seeking to Obtain Naloxone

Naloxone (also known by the brand names of “Narcan” and “Evzio”) is a medication that can reverse an overdose for someone who has taken too many opioids. Examples of opioids are heroin and prescription pain medications such as Vicodin, Oxycontin, or Tramadol. In the past, only heroin users or people taking pain medicines were allowed to get a prescription for naloxone. Now, a new law - Act 139 of 2014 also called “David’s Law” - allows anyone who thinks they can help someone else during an overdose get a prescription for naloxone and use it on another person. ACT 139 also provides legal protections for people who intervene in the case of an overdose. It is recommended that individuals learn about overdose and how to administer naloxone. Here are important steps and things to remember when getting a prescription for naloxone:

## Signs of an Opioid Overdose

- Slow or shallow breathing
- Very sleepy and unable to talk, or unconscious
- Does not respond to attempts to rouse to consciousness
- Skin color is blue or grayish, with dark lips and fingernails
- Snoring or gurgling sounds

## Steps to Follow

1. Make an appointment with your doctor and let him or her know that someone you care about uses heroin or prescription pain medications and could be at risk of an overdose. Explain that since the law (Act 139) now allows you to get the medication (naloxone) that can save someone having an overdose and that you would like to have a prescription for naloxone.

Or take the Physician General’s standing order to a pharmacy and obtain naloxone without a prescription. However, some insurances require you to have a prescription.

2. Take your prescription or the standing order to your local pharmacy to be filled. If the pharmacy does not have a supply of the medicine, they may need to order it for you.

3. Before giving naloxone to someone, it is a good idea to receive training so that you know the signs and how to administer naloxone. You can find training at <http://www.getnaloxonenow.org/> or <https://www.pavtn.net/act-139-training>

4. Whether you have naloxone or not, if someone you know is overdosing, call 911 for medical help right away. If you have not called 911 before giving naloxone, be sure to call 911 immediately after giving naloxone. Naloxone only works short-term. Without medical help a person could go back into overdose and still die. You must also stay with the person until medical help arrives.

# Additional Helpful Information

## Storage and Temperature Control

Naloxone should be stored at room temperature and away from light. According to the manufacturer, the medicine should be kept out of direct light and stored at room temperature (between 59 and 77 degrees Fahrenheit). This is because very hot or cold temperatures could affect the medication in a way that causes it not to work. Do not leave it in your car or in places where it might get very hot or freeze.

## Usage of Naloxone

Depending on the type of opioid that was used, such as fentanyl or a similar more potent substance, additional doses of naloxone may be required in order to reverse the effects of the overdose.

## Shelf Life

(How long the medication stays good for)

Naloxone is good for about two years after it is first made by the drug company. The expiration date will be stamped on the medication and should be checked from time to time to be sure that it is still good to use. Even if it is not past the “use by” date, the medicine could have gone bad. This might be because it got too hot or too cold.

Remember to check the expiration date from time to time.

## Training

ACT 139 says that receiving training, although not required to receive a prescription, may increase the legal protections for those administering naloxone. A training should cover the following information:

- Understanding Opioid (heroin and other prescription medication) addiction, who it effects and how it effects them
- How to tell when someone is having an opioid overdose (signs and symptoms)
- How to tell one kind of overdose from another
- What to do in case of an overdose / what first-aid or rescue steps should be taken
- Information about naloxone and how this medicine works
- How to give naloxone to someone who is overdosing
- The need to call for medical help / 911 right away

You can find training at

<http://www.getnaloxonenow.org/> or  
<https://www.pavtn.net/act-139-training>

# Naloxone

**There are three common ways that naloxone can be given;**

1. By spraying the medicine into the nose (intranasal)
2. By auto injector; a pre-filled, ready to use dose of the medication that gives a shot simply by pressing the medicine against a person's upper leg
3. By giving a person a shot with a needle (intramuscular)

**Narcan® (naloxone HCl) nasal spray.** Administer a single spray of NARCAN Nasal Spray to adults or pediatric patients intranasal into one nostril. Administer additional doses of NARCAN Nasal Spray, using a new nasal spray with each dose, if the patient does not respond or responds and then relapses into respiratory depression, additional doses of NARCAN Nasal Spray may be given every 2 to 3 minutes until emergency medical assistance arrives. To learn more about this product and to view instructions; please visit

<http://www.narcannasalspray.com/>



**Intranasal (nasal spray).** In order to administer naloxone nasal spray, one will need to obtain the following:

- 2mg/2mL of naloxone (prefilled syringe). Make sure it will be made available at the pharmacy stated on the standing order and/or agreement as some pharmacies may not carry the product.

**Prefilled Syringe**



**Nasal Atomization Device**



- Nasal Atomization Device which is **sold separately**. If your pharmacy does not have this in stock they can order it. Additionally, the nasal atomization device can be ordered from a number of medical supply companies without a prescription.

# Naloxone

**Auto-Injector using an auto-injector in a pre-filled, ready to give unit (similar to an epi-pen).** On April 3, 2014, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first naloxone auto-injector which can be used intramuscularly or just below the skin of the thigh area or upper part of the leg. This way of giving someone naloxone is ready to use. You will not have to fill a needle or attach a nasal piece. It also has recording that speaks to you as you are using the medication; it tells you step by step how to give the naloxone. To learn more about this product please visit: <http://evzio.com/patient/about-evzio/what-is-evzio.php>



Dimensions  
3 3/8" high  
2" wide  
5/8" thick



About the height and  
width of a credit card



About the thickness  
of a smartphone

**Intramuscular administration is a shot given with a needle.** If you use this way to give naloxone, you will get a small bottle of medicine and a needle/syringe. You will give the person a shot of naloxone. For information on where on the body to give the shot, ask your doctor or pharmacist.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **How is someone, who gives naloxone to someone else, protected by the law as described in ACT 139?**

Concern about liability should not deter anyone from using naloxone to save a life. There are no known law suits from the use of naloxone. This insignificant legal risk goes away when you do the following:

1. Prior to giving the naloxone, you believed that the person was suffering from an opioid (heroin or other prescription medicine) overdose.
2. You completed a brief training prior to using the medication on someone having an overdose.
3. Before, or right after giving the naloxone medication, you called 911 for medical help.
4. You stay with the person until medical help arrives.

## **How can I encourage someone who has lived through an overdose to get the treatment they need?**

Tell the person who has recently survived an overdose that help from addiction is available and that he or she can fully recover from addiction. Caring professionals work at drug treatment programs and county drug and alcohol offices; they can help a person get the help he or she needs. You can get information about the services available in your county by visiting the following website:

<https://apps.ddap.pa.gov/gethelpnow/>.



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