



Opiate Overdose

It is usually observed 1-3 hours after the drug use.

Signs/ Symptoms

Reduced or stopped breathing: Shallow breaths, Gasping for air, Very pale skin, Blue tint to the lips and fingertips

Spasms or seizures

Nausea or vomiting

Skin flushing

Disorientation, delirium, or a changed mental state

Pinpoint pupils

Coma

What to do in case of Overdose

1. CALL 166

Call the ambulance. Give your precise location and say that someone is unconscious, does not breathe but **do never mention the case of overdose**. If you have problems with the law do not give your name and stay close until the ambulance comes.

2. Check if the person is breathing

If the person is not breathing, provide rescue breathing **IF** you are trained to do so. Open the space around the person in order to have more air and oxygen.

How is it caused?

1. MIXING DRUGS: increases the risk of overdose. Try not to mix an opiate drug with alcohol or benzo- based drugs.

2. LOW DRUG TOLERANCE: Tolerance usually changes after a short period of time. Upon release from jail, rehab, hospital, or detox, be aware that your tolerance levels are much lower. Use less as you are unaware of your current tolerance level. **DO NOT INJECT, SNORT, or SMOKE** high-risk substances during this time period. Entering the bloodstream quickly and concentrated can trigger an overdose.

3. BAD DRUG QUALITY: The quality of drugs is tragically deteriorated last years. Try to use reliable and consistent dealers.

4. SECLUDED DRUG USE: Using alone in lonely places can retard dramatically the reaction of the people around in a case of overdose. Inform at least one that you are going to use drugs and be always with someone else during the use.

5. DEGRADED USER HEALTH: Poor liver, breathing issues (ex. asthma), compromised immune system, active infections, lack of sleep, dehydration, and malnourishment all increase the risk of overdose. Try to **eat** (balanced meals if possible), **sleep** minimum 6-8h per night, **see** a doctor regularly, treat infections. **Do not dismiss health concerns/issues**.

The harm reduction information is not to encourage or condone the use of possession of the illegal drugs. It is to help people make safer choices in their use of drugs that will reduce the spread of Hep C and HIV.