

What Is NARCAN and How Does it Work?

NARCAN Nasal Spray is a medication that temporarily reverses the effects of an overdose from opioids. Opioids include prescription medications, heroin, and fentanyl, including other drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine, being mixed or laced with fentanyl.

How Does NARCAN Work?

According to the NARCAN website, Naloxone, the active ingredient in NARCAN Nasal Spray, competes with opioids to bind with the same receptors in the brain, reversing the effects of an opioid overdose in two to three minutes. The safest thing about NARCAN is that it will not harm someone if you give it to them and they are not overdosing on an opioid. It can be given to people of all ages, from infants to older adults, and can be easily administered by bystanders.

How Do You Administer NARCAN?

NARCAN is for use in the nose only. Each device sprays one time only and contains one dose of medicine. For this reason, do not test the nasal spray before use. To administer the medication, first check if you suspect an overdose: the person will not wake up or is very sleepy and/or not breathing well. When you're ready to give the medication, hold the nasal spray device with your thumb on the bottom of the plunger, then insert the nozzle into either nostril. Press the plunger firmly to give the dose.

Call 911 immediately after giving the dose. If the person does not wake up after two to three minutes, continue to give doses every two to three minutes until they wake. It is safe to continue giving doses. For additional information on administering NARCAN, an instructional video guide is available online from the American Medical Association.

Where Can You Get NARCAN?

As of March 29, 2023, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved NARCAN, 4 milligram (mg) naloxone hydrochloride nasal spray, for over the counter, nonprescription use. It's the first naloxone product approved for use without a prescription. As a result, NARCAN is available to purchase at most retailers nationwide. This lifesaving form of Harm Reduction is available to clients at our Addiction Services facilities as NARCAN kits and/or a refillable prescription. Additionally, NARCAN kits are available through the following local organizations: the Kentucky Harm Reduction Coalition and the Louisville Recovery Community Connection (LRCC). These organizations also conduct training on how to use the kits, among other services.

Whether an individual needs access to harm reduction services or is ready to start a recovery journey, Seven Counties Services is here to help every step of the way. If you or someone you know is in need of urgent help, please call our 24/7 Addiction Recovery Hotline at (502) 583-3951.



Seven Counties Services