# Naloxone Myths Debunked

Indiana Department of Health

## Myth #1: I will get in trouble if I give naloxone

Most states, including Indiana, have Good Samaritan laws in place that may protect a person who gives naloxone to someone experiencing an overdose. In Indiana, Aaron's Law, protects laypersons who have administered naloxone provided they contact 911 and cooperate with EMS and police when they arrive at the scene. To learn more about Aaron's law and what is covered under the law, visit: https://www.in.gov/health/overdose-prevention/files/Aarons-Law-Primer.pdf

Image: Emergent BioSolutions Canada, Inc.

## Myth #2: Multiple doses of naloxone are not needed

While it is recommended to administer one dose (4mg) of naloxone at a time, one 4mg dose is not always sufficient to successfully reverse an overdose.[1] Some research shows that the percentage of opioid overdose events where two or more 4mg doses of naloxone were used may be rising from 35% in a 2016 study to 78% in a 2021 study.[1] The increase in fentanyl overdose may be to blame.

## Myth #3: Naloxone encourages more, or riskier, substance use

There is no evidence that naloxone access increases substance use. In fact, research shows that access to naloxone may result in decreased use of opioids.[8]

## Myth #4: Naloxone can be abused

Naloxone is not addictive, and it cannot be taken in advance to prevent an overdose.[5] It should also be noted that naloxone generally will not have any effect on or cause additional harm to someone in the midst of a medical emergency caused by something other than an opioid overdose (such as a diabetic coma or cardiac arrest).[6] If you think that someone is overdosing, you should not hesitate to give them naloxone.[1]

## Myth #5: Naloxone prevents substance user from seeking treatment

There is no evidence to support that naloxone prevents substance users from entering a treatment program.[2] In fact, the near-death experience often serves as a catalyst to seeking treatment and maintaining recovery.

## Summary

- Naloxone is effective in reversing opioid overdose.
- Naloxone is does not have harmful side effects and is safe to give even if the person is not experiencing an opioid overdose.
- You do not need to be a medical professional to administer naloxone.
- In some cases, more than one 4mg dose of naloxone may be needed to successfully reverse an opioid overdose.
- Naloxone doses and training are available to you.

www.hubcoalitionsc.org

## Myth #6: Naloxone makes people violent

People with physical dependence on opioids may experience withdrawal symptoms within minutes after they are given naloxone.[7] These symptoms may include headaches, changes in blood pressure, rapid heart rate, sweating, nausea, vomiting and shaking.[9] It is unusual, however, for someone to wake up from an overdose and become violent or combative.[7,9]

## Myth #7: Only healthcare professionals can give naloxone

The Indiana State Health Commissioner issued a standing order in 2017 that allows anyone to go directly to a pharmacy and purchase naloxone without having to obtain a prescription from their doctor.

## Myth #8: Naloxone is hard to get

Naloxone is available in all 50 states.[3] The cost of naloxone varies depending on where and how you obtain it, your insurance coverage (if prescribed), and other factors.[3] If cost is a concern, contact your local health department, many have naloxone available for free. You can also visit www.optin.in.gov to locate a naloxone entity near you.

## Myth #9: Naloxone is taking too much of public health's fund and attention

Public health officials believe that every life is worth saving, even if that requires the administration of naloxone to a patient on several occasions. More than 80,000 of the 107,000 drug overdose deaths in 2021 involved an opioid.[4] One study found that bystanders were present in more than one in three overdoses involving opioids.[4] In a 2022 study in Rhode Island, they found that providing naloxone to injection substance users, averted an estimate 25% of opioid overdose deaths at an incremental cost of over $27,000 per opioid overdose death averted.[10]

## Naloxone Administration Training

The Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) offers naloxone training to groups, on request. Please contact Laura Hollowell, the naloxone program manager, to schedule a training. IDOH also has virtual trainings available to the public and first responders available on https://www.train.org/indiana/welcome. All IDOH trainings provide a certificate upon completion.

**Scan here for video demonstrations on how to use naloxone[4]**

For additional information on Naloxone:
**www.in.gov/health/overdose-prevention/naloxone**


**Sources**

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