

Opioids and Benzos or Etizolam

The following information outlines how benzos or benzo-like substances can complicate and delay opioid overdose response, and what to do if these substances are involved.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN BENZOS ARE MIXED WITH OPIOIDS?

Increased likelihood of overdose from combined effects on central nervous system (e.g. respiratory depression)

There is no antidote for benzos in community and **naloxone does not work on Benzos, BUT will temporarily reverse opioid effects**

After naloxone administration the person may begin breathing normally, but may not wake up

**When in doubt
GIVE NALOXONE**

RESPONDING TO AN OVERDOSE WITH BENZOS OR ETIZOLAM

If you witness someone having an opioid overdose and suspect benzos are involved:

1. **Call 911** immediately and follow **SAVE ME** steps
2. **More doses of naloxone should only be given if the person is not breathing normally** (less than 10 breaths a minute)
3. **If the person is breathing normally but remains unconscious, place in recovery position** and stay with them until emergency services arrive
4. If available, use a pulse oximeter to monitor oxygen saturation in the blood



AFTERCARE

Sedation drowsiness, blackouts and memory loss can last for hours, transfer for monitoring if possible

GET YOUR DRUGS CHECKED AND DON'T USE ALONE

- When getting your drugs tested, ask for drugs to be checked for benzos
- Use with a buddy or at an overdose prevention or supervised consumption site¹
- When using with a buddy, stagger use so someone is able to respond

For more information:

- [Using Oximeters During an Overdose Response](#)²
- [Video: Responding to Overdose During COVID-19](#)³
- [Resources for People Who Use Substances](#)⁴
- [Video: Placing someone in recovery position](#)⁵

1. <https://towardtheheart.com/site-finder>

2. <https://towardtheheart.com/resource/using-an-oximeter-during-an-overdose/open>

3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUrnfmIbwM4>

4. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/priority-populations/people-who-use-substances>

5. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEfK_hauyXU



BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority