

# How to respond to opioid poisoning



**Give breaths.  
Use naloxone.**

**Call 911. Stay and help.** Canada's Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act may protect you.

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## Signs of an opioid poisoning (overdose)

Opioid poisoning (overdose) happens when a toxic amount of opioids overwhelms the body's ability to function, causing breathing to slow, stop, or become abnormal. Brain injury and death can occur when the brain and body do not get enough oxygen.



Slow or no breathing



Choking, gurgling or snoring



Not responding and can't be woken



Blue or grey lips and nails



Stiff neck, chest, or body

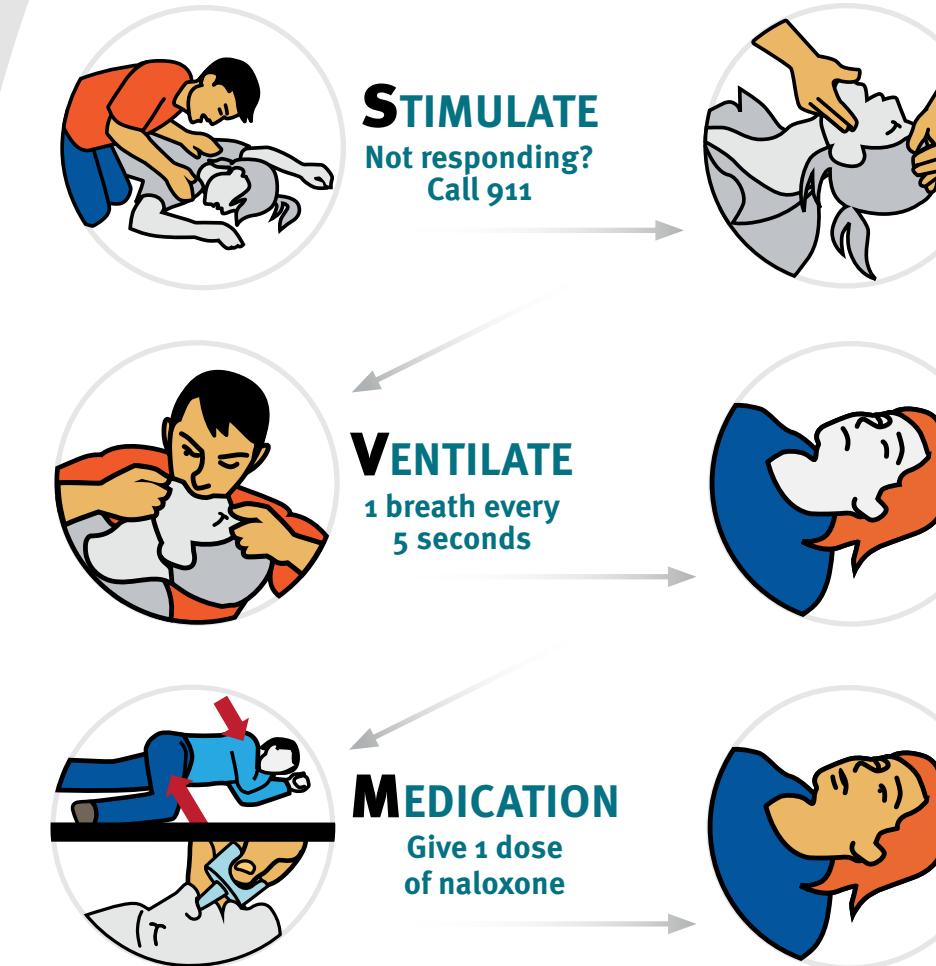


Cold or clammy skin



Tiny pupils

# SAVE ME steps



## Keep giving breaths

**CALL 911** and follow their advice. Check for a pulse. If you cannot find a pulse in 10 seconds or less, give chest compressions and rescue breaths.

Giving breaths helps get enough oxygen to the brain until the naloxone has time to work.  
Updated January 2026

**CALL 911.** Stay and help. Naloxone wears off in 30-120 minutes so an opioid poisoning (overdose) can return.

## Safety Tips

**All routes** of taking drugs can cause drug poisoning.



**Have a buddy** or use an overdose prevention site. Make sure someone can call for help.



**Start low, go slow.** Drugs may be stronger than you realize. Check drugs when you can.



**Have a safety plan.** Carry naloxone.



**Beware of mixing.** Avoid using alcohol. Prescription drugs can increase risk of drug poisoning.



**Take care of yourself.** Use less when having health issues or haven't used for a while.

**HelpStartsHere.gov.bc.ca**  
for mental health and substance use supports

Find out where you can get naloxone at

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# How to respond to stimulant toxicity



**Call 911. Stay and help.** Canada's Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act may protect you.

BC Drug & Poison Info Centre  
(24 hrs): 1-800-567-8911

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## Signs of stimulant toxicity



### Rigid, jerking limbs or seizure

Remove any object nearby that could hurt them. Do not restrain or put anything in their mouth.



### Chest pain or severe headache

If you cannot find a pulse within 10 seconds, start CPR with chest compressions and rescue breaths. Use an AED if available.



### Unconscious or in-and-out

Place them on their side in recovery position. Check if they are breathing normally. If they are not breathing normally, follow SAVE ME steps.



### Skin feels very hot

Place cool, damp cloths on the forehead, back of neck, and armpits.



### Anxiety, paranoia, confusion, agitation, or hallucinations

They may need support and medical care.

- Use a calm and steady tone of voice.
- Ask permission before touching the person.
- Provide reassurance.
- Offer sips of water.



Stimulants or "uppers" speed the body up, like amphetamines, crystal meth, cocaine, MDMA (Ecstasy), and Ritalin/Adderall.

**There is no antidote to stimulant toxicity. CALL 911.**

Naloxone will not reverse stimulant toxicity but it can still help if a person has taken a mix of drugs. When in doubt, use naloxone. It's safe.



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**CALL 911. Stay and help. Keep the person comfortable and hydrated.**  
**BC Drug & Poison Info Centre 1-800-567-8911 (24 hrs)**

**Canada's Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act may protect you.** Find more at: [canada.ca/opioids](http://canada.ca/opioids)

If you are at the scene of a drug poisoning and you or someone else calls 911 to get medical assistance, **you will not be charged with:**

- Simple possession (possession for your own personal use) of an illegal substance
- Breach of probation or parole relating to simple drug possession
- The Act however **does not protect** against charges related to:
  - Selling illegal drugs (trafficking)
  - Offences other than drug possession
  - Any outstanding arrest warrants
  - Violation of pre-trial release, probation order, conditional sentence or parole for an offence *other than* simple possession