

## How to recognize an Opioid Overdose.

- ◆ Person will not wake up.
- ◆ No response to yelling.
- ◆ Blue lips or fingernails.
- ◆ Clammy cool skin.
- ◆ Shallow or slow breathing (can sound like a rattle or snore).
- ◆ Seizures or convulsions.
- ◆ No response to knuckles being rubbed hard on breastbone.

**If you suspect  
someone is  
overdosing...**

**CALL 911!**

**Don't wait every  
second counts.**

Seek help if you or someone you know  
show signs of addiction or displays  
suspicious behavior by calling  
The Massachusetts Substance Abuse  
Information helpline  
at 1-800-327-5050  
(TTY) 7-617-536-5872

Dispose of unused medications and  
sharps (needles, syringes and lancets)  
properly.

**For more information**  
call the Health Department at  
978-970-4010 Ext. (9) 4304



Lowell Health Department  
341 Pine Street  
Lowell, MA 01851  
978-970-4010 Ext. (9) 4304  
[www.lowellma.gov/depts/health](http://www.lowellma.gov/depts/health)

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## Facts About Pain Medication



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## What is an Opioid?

*An Opioid is a form of narcotic pain medication that dulls senses, relieves pain and induces sleep.*

An opioid has been prescribed for pain management. There are several factors to keep in mind while taking this medication.

- ◆ Take this medication only when in pain and if prescribed for you.
- ◆ Discontinue use of medication as soon as possible
- ◆ This medication can be addictive.
- ◆ Taking this medication with other opioids or benzodiazepines, even those that are prescribed for you increases the risk of accidental overdose.
- ◆ Drinking alcohol while taking this medication increases the risk of accidental overdose.

## What is an Opioid Overdose?

*An opioid overdose is when a person's body has more drugs than it can handle, causing them to slowly stop breathing.*

## What are Commonly Prescribed Opioids?

Although there are many types of opioids prescribed for various levels of pain, the most common are:

- ◆ Vicodin
- ◆ Percocet
- ◆ Percodan
- ◆ Codeine
- ◆ Dilaudid
- ◆ Oxycodone
- ◆ Oxycontin (Extended Release)
  - Do **not** crush or cut.

## What are Other Opioids?

- ◆ Demerol
- ◆ Fentanyl
- ◆ Morphine
- ◆ Methadone
- ◆ **HEROIN**

## What is a Benzodiazepine (Benzo)?

*A benzodiazepine is medication commonly used to treat anxiety and insomnia.*

## What are Common Benzo's?

- ◆ Klonopin
- ◆ Valium
- ◆ Xanax
- ◆ Ativan
- ◆ Librium

## How can an Accidental Overdose be Prevented?

- ◆ Tell your doctor **all** of the medications you are taking including over the counter drugs.
- ◆ **Do not mix medications.**
- ◆ Do not take **more** medication than is prescribed.
- ◆ Never take medications that are **not** prescribed for you.
- ◆ Do not drink **alcohol** when taking medications.
- ◆ Keep a list of your medications and let family members **know the location** of the list.
- ◆ Be aware that **tolerance** (the amount of medication needed to achieve the same effect) **increases the longer medication is taken.**