

COVID-19: Responding to an opioid overdose when using a Take Home Naloxone (THN) kit

The intended purpose of this document is to describe current guidance on how to respond to a suspected opioid overdose when using a Take Home Naloxone (THN) kit in the context of COVID-19. It is prudent in the context of dual public health emergencies in BC that people understand how to safely provide a timely and efficient response to suspected opioid overdoses, including a call to 9-1-1, provision of ventilations, and administration of Naloxone.



The THN face shield will protect against COVID-19. The shield has a one-way valve and large impermeable area that protects the responder from respiratory secretions. The BCCDC continues to promote the use of a THN kit when responding to an overdose in the context of COVID-19, including ventilations with the THN face shield.

Overdose Response Protocol:

- S – Stimulate:** using name, noise, and pain stimulus – encourage them to breathe – Call 9-1-1
- A – Administer Naloxone:** put on gloves, prepare Naloxone – give 2 doses if needed
- V – Ventilations:** check & open airway, use THN face shield, 1 breath every 5 seconds
- E – Evaluate:** check for breathing after 35 breaths – any changes to show naloxone is working?
(Go to next step if more naloxone is needed – if not put in recovery position to monitor)
- M – Medicine:** administer next dose of Naloxone while providing (or returning) to rescue breaths
- E – Evaluate:** check for breathing after 35 breaths; repeat cycle of Naloxone and breaths if needed

*If the person’s heart stops, with no detectable pulse, compressions only CPR can be initiated, leaving the face shield in place over their mouth to protect yourself from droplets.

Know the Response: SAVE ME Steps



S – Stimulate
No Response 9-1-1



A – Administer Naloxone
2 Doses if needed



V – Ventilate
Every 5 Seconds



E – Evaluate
Check for Breath



M – More Medicine
Administer Naloxone



E – Evaluate & Support
Return to Breaths

Additional Resources on Harm Reduction & Overdose Response

(Click on subject description for direction to web resources)

Island Health: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/2018-04/overdose-opioid-how-to-respond.pdf>

Island Health: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/overdose-prevention-supervised-consumption-locations>

Toward the Heart: <https://towardtheheart.com/prevention>

Toward the Heart: <https://towardtheheart.com/site-finder>

First Nation Health Authority: <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus>

BCCDC: <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID19-harm-reduction.pdf>

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

BCCDC: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/signage-posters>

CATIE: <https://catie.ca/en/home>

CATIE: <https://www.catie.ca/en/programming/best-practices-harm-reduction>

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction: <https://www.ccsa.ca/Impacts-COVID-19-Substance-Use>

Vancouver Coastal Health:

https://sneezesdiseases.com/assets/wysiwyg/COVID%2019%20community%20resources/Population%20Care%201-%20Pager_March%2018%202020.pdf

Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions: <https://www.stopoverdose.gov.bc.ca/theweekly/overdose-prevention-and-covid-19>

