

# Naloxone (Narcan)



Intranasal Naloxone

## Facts of Interest

- Naloxone has a stronger attraction to receptors than opioids.
- Reverses side effects of opioids.
- Very difficult for users to overdose when being administered.

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## How it Works

Scientists from the University of Colorado have discovered that addiction to opioids can be blocked. Discoveries have been made regarding the immune systems role in addiction. Studies indicate this role is as great as that of the nervous system. Using this information they were able to block addiction while continuing pain-relief. Naloxone blocks the release of dopamine, the feel good chemical in the brain, thereby eliminating the reward sensation.

Naloxone and opioids are attracted to the same receptors, though naloxone makes a stronger connection. This allows naloxone to replace the opioids, which in turn reverses the side effects of the drugs.

## Application to Narcotics

Naloxone works by reversing the side effect of opioids, which can ultimately lead to addiction and death. Therefore, when an overdose to drugs like heroin, Vicodin, Percocet, and OxyContin occur, naloxone can be used to reverse the affects. There is little to very low probability that a user will overdose with the Nasal spray. This

makes Naloxone an effective way to treat overdose victims in the short-term.

## Current Issues

Studies have suggested policies that could be implemented to make naloxone available to the public<sup>1</sup>:

- Prescription
- Distribution Programs
- FDA relabeling

There has been a movement to make naloxone more accessible, since prevention programs around the country have shown that over 10,000 overdoses have been reversed<sup>2</sup>. Another reason to make naloxone available is because opioid overdose related deaths are on the rise.

Arguments against making naloxone widely available are<sup>1</sup>:

- Liability issues for the person who administers
- Increase use of the drug because it is seen as a safety net

For more information on Naloxone, check online at:  
<http://www.drugs.com/pro/naloxone.html>



**"...over 10,000 overdoses have been reversed."**



Intravenous Naloxone.

1. Am J Public Health. [Expanded Access to Naloxone: Options for Critical Response to the Epidemic of Opioid Overdose Mortality](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2661437/) .

2. CDC. [Community-Based Opioid Overdose Prevention Programs Providing Naloxone](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6106a1.htm) <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6106a1.htm>