

Mayo Clinic Minute: Three things to know when using Narcan during an opioid overdose

Opioids are one of the most commonly prescribed medications to treat acute pain. Opioids are a class of drugs, including medications such as fentanyl, morphine, and oxycodone. These medications work by blocking pain receptors in the central nervous system.

But what makes opioids effective, is also what makes them dangerous due to risks associated with addiction and overdoses. Opioid misuse has skyrocketed. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, opioids are now the main driver of drug overdose deaths in the U.S.

The Food and Drug Administration is soon expected to announce whether to make Narcan, a nasal spray version of naloxone, available over the counter without a prescription. Narcan is a rescue medicine that can be administered in the event of an opioid overdose. FDA approval would allow Narcan to be sold in grocery stores, convenience stores, vending machines and other retail locations without a prescription.

Mayo Clinic's Dr. Holly Geyer says there are three things to remember when using Narcan that can help save someone's life.

| Video | Audio |
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| | Naloxone is a rescue medication that temporarily blocks the effects of opioids during an overdose. The first thing to know, according to Mayo Clinic's Dr. Holly Geyer, is how to use it on someone having an overdose, even if they are unconscious. |
| Holly Geyer, M.D. Internal Medicine Mayo Clinic | "You're going to put that person on their side in the recovery position, make sure that your surroundings are safe, and then administer it by just putting it inside the nostril and giving it a squeeze." |
| | Naloxone temporarily blocks the effects of an opioid. |
| | "Naloxone goes through the bloodstream, straight to that part of the brain, knocks off the opioid from that receptor, binds to it and prevents the opioid from having an effect." |
| | Next, remember Naloxone's effects are temporary and may last only minutes. Calling 911 is critical. |
| | "It is always a medical emergency if Naloxone is given. Call 911 right away." |
| | For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Marty Velasco Hames. |