



Overdose Information

General Information

Using drugs is risky, using a lot of drugs or mixing drugs, including alcohol increases these risks as no-one can ever tell what the effects will be. It is possible to overdose on any drug. People who have vomited or passed out after drinking have in fact overdosed on alcohol. It is important to know what to do if somebody becomes ill after drinking alcohol or using any kind of drug.

If somebody becomes very ill and always if someone has lost consciousness
What to do in the event of an overdose

- ❖ Don't panic
- ❖ Lie them on the floor
- ❖ Put them onto their side and tilt their head backwards (the recovery position)
- ❖ **Call an ambulance, dial 999**
- ❖ Do not leave them alone unless you have to get help yourself. If you do have to leave them, make sure they cannot roll over onto their back.
- ❖ If you can, tell the emergency services what they have taken. This could save their life. Act fast, save a life.

The Recovery Position

Know what to do if someone is unconscious and breathing.

The recovery position:

1. Tilt their head back and lift their chin. Make sure their legs are straight.. (diagram A)
2. Bend the arm nearest to you as if they are waving, with their palm facing upwards. (diagram A)
3. Reach over and put the arm that's furthest away from you across their body putting the back of their hand against their cheek (diagram B).
4. Pull the leg furthest away from you up into a bent position and keep the foot flat on the floor. (diagram B)
5. To roll the person onto their side keep their hand against their cheek and pull the bent knee towards you. (diagram C)
6. A person in the recovery position (diagram D).



Once the person is in the recovery position stay with them and keep an eye on their breathing. Get someone else to call an ambulance if you can. If there is no one else to call an ambulance and you have to leave them, make sure that they can't roll over onto their back while you are dialling 999.

Injecting Introduction

Injecting drugs is very risky; people who inject drugs endanger their lives more than other drug users. Accidental overdose is the biggest cause of death among people who inject drugs.

Overdosing is common amongst injecting heroin users. The chances are you used to know someone who has since died from an overdose.

Deaths from heroin overdose are preventable. You can avoid overdosing by knowing what puts you at risk, knowing the warning signs of overdose and knowing what to do in an emergency. This information will also help you save another person's life if they overdose when you are with them.

Are you putting your self at risk of overdosing? Is there someone you know who could end up overdosing? Be aware of risks, and what to do if someone overdoses. Look after yourself and look after your mates.

Know what puts you at risk of an overdose?

Using opiates when you are unsure of your tolerance

Your tolerance to opiates will drop quickly after a detox, or any break in using, including time in prison. If you use again, your tolerance is lower and your risk of overdose is much higher. Don't try and take the same amount of drugs that you are used to – you could easily overdose.

If you do start to use opiates again after a break, don't inject: with your tolerance down, you will get a big enough hit from smoking opiates. But be careful – even smoking and mixing drugs, including alcohol, can be very risky.

You need to know that if you are using naltrexone and then you stop taking it and start using heroin (or other opiates) again, your risk of overdosing is very high.

As well as having lost any tolerance to opiates while on naltrexone, it seems that the risk of overdose is increased even further because the opiate receptors in the brain become more sensitive.

Injecting heroin.

You are at a much higher risk of overdose if you inject heroin rather than smoke it. If you do inject, you increase the risks if you inject alone. Before you inject heroin find out how strong the gear is – test a bit first.

Injecting again after a missed hit is risky. It takes time for the drugs to be absorbed into the bloodstream.

Taking more than one drug at a time

Using more than one 'downer' type drug is extremely dangerous; never mix drugs like heroin, valium, temazepam and alcohol. The more downers and alcohol in someone system, the smaller the amount of heroin needed to overdose.

Using methadone and other drugs

Taking part in a methadone treatment programme correctly will greatly reduce the risk of overdose. Methadone is a dangerous drug; and even small amounts can kill people who aren't tolerant. Most deaths from methadone are a result of it being mixed with alcohol or because someone has taken another person's dose.

Cocaine and Crack

Cocaine and Crack can temporarily mask the downer effects of heroin and other 'downer-type' drugs. The cocaine will wear off quicker than the heroin and, if you have injected more heroin than you thought, you could overdose.

As well as putting users at a higher risk of overdose, the cost of heroin and crack habit can rapidly spiral out of control. Beware of dealers offering a rock with a bag.

Know the signs of an overdose

People overdosing will...

- ❖ Have pale skin, blue lips and fingernails;
- ❖ Will not wake up (or react to loud noises);
- ❖ Make gurgling, snoring or choking sounds.
- ❖ Have shallow or disrupted breathing;
- ❖ Have a slow or very faint pulse;

There can be a long time delay between having a hit and first signs of an overdose – sometimes these may be hours later.

If a person cannot easily be woken, they may have overdosed. Nothing you do will bring them round.

Act fast save a life. Call an ambulance dial 999.

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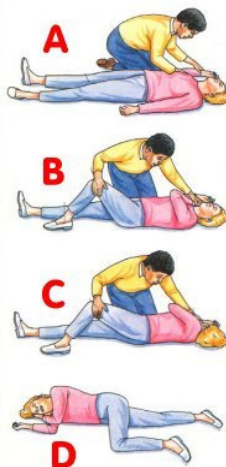
The Recovery Position

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8. Bend the arm nearest to you as if they are waving, with their palm facing upwards. (diagram A)
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10. Pull the leg furthest away from you up into a bent position and keep the foot flat on the floor. (diagram B)
11. To roll the person onto their side keep their hand against their cheek and pull the bent knee towards you. (diagram C)
12. A person in the recovery position (diagram D).

Once the person is in the recovery position stay with them and keep an eye on their breathing. Get someone else to call an ambulance if you can. If there is no one else to call an ambulance and you have to leave them, make sure that they can't roll over onto their back while you are dialling 999.



Calling an Ambulance

If a person has overdosed you must phone an ambulance immediately. Dial 999

Tell the operator that someone has overdosed. If you can tell them what the person has taken. The more information you can give the more help they can offer you straightaway. This could help you to save their life.

Some people are reluctant to call an ambulance to an overdose as they are afraid the police will turn up too. You can reduce the risk of the police arriving by keeping calm and making sure there is no commotion in the background. So don't delay as the quicker the ambulance arrives, the more likely you are to save a person's life.

The police believe that saving lives takes priority over any police enquiry.

Act Fast Save a Life

(Please check that these details are correct for the Lancashire area)