

There is a lot you can do to reduce the chance of overdose

Get naloxone

Naloxone reverses the effects of opioid overdose. It can be prescribed by a doctor and is also available directly from a pharmacist. It is cheaper to get it on prescription.

Always carry it with you.

Try not to mix drugs

Taking more than one drug can increase the risk of overdose. That includes using on top of methadone. Taking opioid drugs with alcohol or benzos can slow your breathing and heart rate. Try to use one drug at a time.

Be smart about tolerance

If you've taken a break from using drugs for even a day or two (detox, rehab, jail, using less), your tolerance can drop quickly and so could you. Buying from a different person or a different batch can mean you're not used to the gear. **If you've had a break, or using something new, try a small amount first.**

Learn about Half-life

Some drugs have a long half-life. The half-life of a drug is the time it takes for the concentration of it in your body to be reduced by half. There are drugs you might have taken yesterday and still cause you to drop if you have a hit today. Some benzos, including Diazepam (Valium) have a long half-life. Depending on your health, age and how much / and for how long you've been taking it, it may be as long as 50 or 60 hours, or maybe even longer. **Think about what you've used and when.**

Be careful with pharmaceuticals

Some pharmaceuticals are a lot stronger than illicit drugs. Fentanyl is about 100 times stronger than morphine – and the risk is increased even more when using more than one drug at a time. **Try to only use one drug at a time, and don't assume pharmaceuticals are safer.**

Preventing overdose

Try not to use alone or in an unfamiliar place

If you drop and you're alone and no one can find you, you're more likely to die. Try not to use alone. But if you do, tell someone you are about to use, and arrange to check in with them a few minutes later. Think about where you're using. If you drop, will you be found?

Think about other ways to use

Injecting drugs instead of swallowing or snorting increases your risk of overdose because less is needed to achieve the same effect. It's a lot harder to predict the dosage amount when injecting. Consider smoking, snorting or shafting.

Look after your health

Health problems make it harder for your body to deal with drugs, especially problems with your lungs, heart, kidney or liver. Infections and dehydration can also increase your risk. **Look after your health.**

Get a health check-up and act on any concerns.

History of overdose

If you've overdosed in the past, you might have damage to your kidneys, liver or brain. This increases your risk of future overdose.

Keep drugs out of the way of kids

Accidentally taking pharmaceutical or illicit opioids can lead to serious harm and may be fatal. Keep all opioids out of the reach of children and make sure take-away doses of medicines are locked away (e.g. in a cupboard, drawer, cash box or safe).

If someone accidentally takes opioids, don't delay. Ring 000 straight away, tell them what's happened and follow their direction, including administering naloxone if you have it.