How to respond to an overdose.

Minutes matter. You can help even if you have no training. Many street drugs contain fentanyl, and people often do not know what they took.

Call 911 right away and stay on the line. Poison Control: **1-800-222-1222.** Calling is always the right choice, even if you are afraid.

Know the signs

- Will not wake up or respond to your voice
- Slow, shallow or no breathing
- Gurgling, choking or snoring sounds
- Blue, gray or pale lips and fingertips
- Small pupils
- Limp body, cold or clammy skin
- Vomiting while passed out (also a sign of alcohol poisoning)

What to do

1. **Check.** Shout their name and shake their shoulders. Rub the middle of their chest firmly with your knuckles.
2. **Call 911.** Say the person is unresponsive or not breathing. Give the address. Follow the dispatcher's instructions.
3. **Give naloxone (Narcan).** Lay them on their back, tilt the head back, put the nozzle in one nostril and press the plunger firmly. Follow the instructions on the package.
4. **Support breathing.** If they are not breathing, do what the 911 dispatcher tells you, including rescue breaths or chest compressions if you are able.
5. **Stay and watch.** Turn them on their side with the top knee bent so they cannot choke. If there is no response after 2 to 3 minutes, give another dose in the other nostril. Stay until help arrives. Naloxone wears off, so they still need medical care even if they wake up.

Helpful words

SAY "I am calling 911 right now."

SAY "Stay with me. Help is on the way."

SAY "I have Narcan. I am giving it to you."

SAY Tell responders what you know about what was taken.

Please avoid

AVOID Leaving them to "sleep it off."

AVOID Cold showers, ice or slapping.

AVOID Making them vomit.

AVOID Giving food, drink or more drugs.

AVOID Waiting to see if it gets worse.

Numbers to share

Emergency	**911**	Poison Control	**1-800-222-1222**
Treatment referral (SAMHSA)	**1-800-662-4357**	Crisis support	**call or text 988**
Shelter, food and local help	**dial 211**	Domestic violence hotline	**1-800-799-7233**

Take care of yourself too. Narcan nasal spray is sold without a prescription at many pharmacies. Keep it where you can reach it and check the date. Never use alone.

Find local help in all 67 Alabama counties

Scan for shelter, food, rent and power help, recovery, veterans, legal aid and Spanish-language help, plus guides on how to help.

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Information last reviewed November 2026. This sheet is general guidance, not medical, legal or mental health advice. In an emergency, call 911. Numbers change, so confirm before you share. Free to print and share. the br project, Birmingham, Alabama.