

What to Do in an Overdose Situation

Since 2012, drug-related deaths in South Dakota have increased by 77%, and in 2023, 65 people died from unintentional and preventable overdoses.

While you may not think you'll find yourself in an overdose situation, substance use disorders can affect anyone, from family members and friends to neighbors, coworkers or your kids. It's important to know the signs of an overdose and be aware of safety measures you can take in an emergency.

Signs & Overdose Response

First, make sure you have naloxone (Narcan) on hand. Just like a fire extinguisher or a first aid kit, Narcan should be a part of every home's emergency toolkit. You can get Narcan free from participating South Dakota pharmacies. Just visit [LetsBeClearSD.com](https://letsbeclearsd.com) to find one near you.

Next, know the signs of an overdose. Look for three hallmark symptoms known as the overdose triad:

- Pinpoint pupils
- Respiratory distress
- Decreased level of consciousness

Other signs to look for include disorientation, dark lips and fingernails, pale or cold skin, and choking or gurgling sounds. If you can't get a response from the individual, don't assume they're asleep. Taking action immediately could save their life. Administer Narcan if possible, perform CPR and call 911 immediately.

Getting Help is the Best Prevention

The most effective way to prevent an overdose is to get help. Though overdoses can occur from a variety of substances, opioids and fentanyl have contributed to the greatest increases in recent years. These substances are highly potent and addictive, but treatment works, and recovery is possible.

The 988 Lifeline is a local, confidential resource for substance use, mental health and emotional concerns. Call, text or chat 988 if you need help or are concerned about someone in your life. You can also visit SDBehavioralHealth.gov or [LetsBeClearSD.com](https://letsbeclearsd.com) to find resources and treatment options.