

# Rescue Breathing 101



Oxygen is important to the survival of someone who is experiencing an overdose. During overdose, an

individual can experience slowed or shallow breathing that decreases the amount of oxygen entering the body to a dangerous level. Damage to the brain can begin three minutes after a lack of oxygen. Rescue breathing can increase an overdosed person's chance of survival and we recommend this in addition to the use of naloxone, which will reverse an opioid overdose. If you believe someone is overdosing, give them naloxone.



## What are the signs of an opioid overdose?

- People with darker skin tones may have pale or ashen lips, gums or fingertips and people with lighter skin tones may have blue or purple lips, gums or fingertips
- Tensing of fingers, arms, legs, toes
- Lack of responsiveness to irritation such as a sternum rub
- Eyes rolled back or appearing vacant

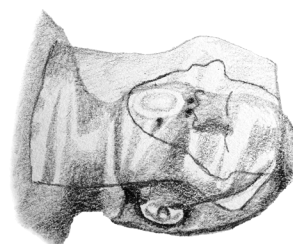
## Ok! What next?

While many overdoses are reversed without the help of 911, every overdose is different. Pre-existing health conditions can worsen the effects of overdose and naloxone, and overdoses have become more complex with the changing drug supply. Your state may have protections for people responding or trying to help someone experiencing an overdose through a “Good Samaritan Law”. Check out state policies at our website [nextdistro.org/policies](https://nextdistro.org/policies).

Naloxone should be given to the overdosed individual. There is nasal spray and injectable (IM) naloxone that come in different doses. Follow instructions on its use and then if the person is not breathing, you will provide rescue breathing.



Use a barrier between mouths to protect both yourself and the person you're providing rescue breathing to. Barriers can include a medical mask, cloth, paper towel, or a CPR face shield.



The barrier needs to allow air to move through it easily. Leather and thick fabrics are NOT good barriers.

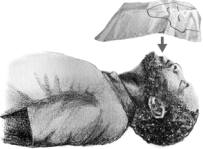
# Rescue Breathing: Step by Step



1. Put the person on a solid flat surface, preferably the floor. Make sure they are lying flat on their back.



2. Tilt their head back by pushing down on the forehead while lifting the chin. This will lift the person's tongue and open the airway.



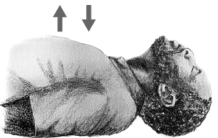
3. Place the barrier over their mouth.



4. Pinch nostrils shut.



5. Take a breath in, create a seal by covering their mouth with yours and exhale for one second.



6. Watch for the chest to rise while you are exhaling. If the chest does not rise, readjust, and repeat step 2.



7. Continue to provide rescue breaths until the person can either breathe on their own or medical services have arrived.



8. Give 1 rescue breath every 5 to 6 seconds or about 10 to 12 breaths per minute.

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## A Note on CPR:

Rescue breaths can be given alone or in addition to chest compressions. When an individual has a pulse but is not breathing, rescue breaths alone will get oxygen into a person's body. If the person has no pulse AND is not breathing, CPR is required. CPR consists of cycles of chest compressions and rescue breathing. If you are not trained in CPR, and have access to a phone, a 911 operator can talk you through proper CPR techniques.



Xylazine is becoming more commonly found in Fentanyl and can cause extremely slowed breathing. Xylazine does not respond to naloxone in the same way as an opioid, like fentanyl, which means the person might remain in a heavy nod for a while after being given naloxone. It is important to give someone naloxone if you suspect they're overdosing. Once they begin breathing again, do not continue to administer naloxone, even if they continue to remain unresponsive.

