

Myths & Facts

ABOUT NALOXONE (NARCAN®)

MYTH

Having naloxone available encourages people to take more drugs.

FACT

When someone has access to naloxone, their level of drug use does not change. Being revived with naloxone is not fun. It can cause painful and severe physical and emotional symptoms. For this reason, people only use naloxone in life-threatening situations.

MYTH

People won't seek treatment if they have their own naloxone.

FACT

There is no evidence to support this statement. Naloxone increases the chance of someone seeking treatment by keeping people alive.

MYTH

Naloxone is not effective for treating fentanyl overdoses.

FACT

Naloxone is both safe and effective for reversing fentanyl overdoses, though it may take more than one dose and a quicker response.

MYTH

Naloxone is unnecessary. Overdoses can be reversed by putting ice in the person's pants or injecting them with salt water or milk.

FACT

Naloxone and rescue breathing are the only safe and effective methods of reversing an opioid overdose.

MYTH

I can only get naloxone if I have a prescription from a doctor.

FACT

Any person who asks a pharmacist for naloxone for themselves or someone else can purchase naloxone, with or without a prescription. However, this does not necessarily mean that every pharmacy will always stock naloxone, so we suggest calling ahead to make sure they have it on the shelf.

Myths & Facts

ABOUT METHADONE AND BUPRENORPHINE (SUBOXONE®)

MYTH

Taking methadone or buprenorphine is replacing one addiction with another.

FACT

There is a difference between addiction and physical dependence. Medications like methadone and buprenorphine help stabilize people who are addicted to opioids, which improves their ability to maintain jobs and relationships.

MYTH

Taking methadone or buprenorphine isn't real recovery.

FACT

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines recovery as "A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live self-directed lives, and strive to reach their full potential." Medications like methadone and buprenorphine help people discover the recovery that best fits their lives.

MYTH

People use methadone and buprenorphine because it makes them high.

FACT

At the right dose, methadone and buprenorphine do not make people with opioid addiction high. They help people feel stable and reduce their cravings to use. People who buy it off the streets typically do so to try to treat themselves when they cannot access treatment.

MYTH

Buprenorphine and methadone are short-term solutions, and people should stop taking them as soon as possible.

FACT

There is no set amount of time that people should take buprenorphine or methadone. Because addiction is a long-term condition, treatment can last for years and should be continued for as long as people and their medical providers decide is necessary.