

5 Minutes Is All It Takes To Identify and Reverse an Overdose

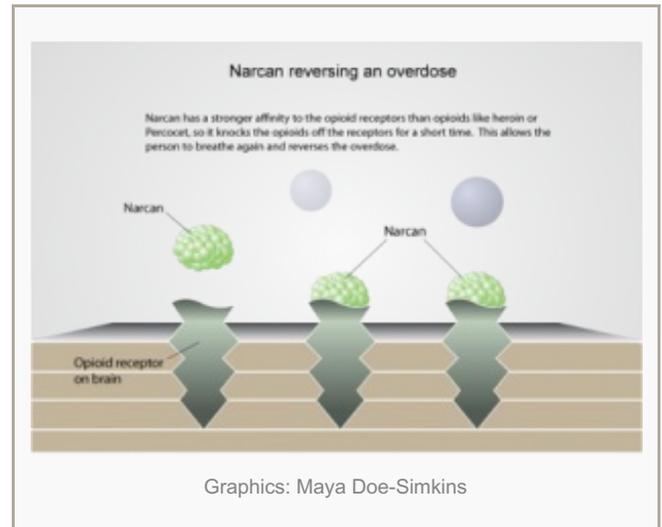
LEARN TO SAVE A LIFE IN UNDER 10 MINUTES!

Harm Reduction Coalition's [Eliza Wheeler](#) says “**Access to naloxone should be low-threshold and does not require extensive instruction.**” New research says: *brief is effective.*

New evidence released today suggests that 5-10 minutes of education is all it takes to effectively recognize and respond to an overdose with the lifesaving drug naloxone. The findings, published in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, contribute to a growing body of evidence that brief overdose education to opioid users is sufficient for effective [naloxone](#) distribution.

For the past 12 years the [Drug Overdose Prevention and Education Project](#) (DOPE) has been distributing naloxone and educating people on how to use it. The benefit of naloxone is that it is a short acting [opioid antagonist](#) which rapidly reverses the life-threatening depression of the central nervous system and respiratory system stemming from an opioid overdose, allowing the person to breathe normally.

Harm Reduction Coalition's DOPE Project distributes naloxone through low-threshold drug services such as [syringe access programs in San Francisco](#), with education lasting between 5 -10 minutes. The aim of the study was to determine if a 5-10 minute brief intervention was sufficient to educate people on how to recognize and manage an overdose and how to respond by administering naloxone.



The study found that:

- Recognition, response and administration of naloxone for an overdose significantly increased after brief education among first-time recipients
- Knowledge of appropriate responses to an overdose was high, with 96% of participants identifying at least one acceptable action to assess and one acceptable action to respond to an opioid overdose.
- A significant increase in the correct assembly and proper administration of naloxone after brief education
- A high level of knowledge on overdose recognition and response was retained following the brief education.

Eliza Wheeler, from the [Harm Reduction Coalition's DOPE Project](#) and one of the authors of the study said:

“This study supports our belief that people who use drugs, along with their friends, family and neighbors are capable of responding effectively to an overdose situation after receiving only brief training”.

Eliza continued by saying

“Access to naloxone should be low-threshold and does not require extensive instruction. We hope this paper is helpful to programs that are working to implement naloxone distribution that best meet the needs of drug users and other potential overdose bystanders”

These findings echo prior peer-reviewed research contribute to growing body of evidence demonstrating the efficacy

of brief education for naloxone distribution.

Study: Behar, E., Santos, G-M., Wheeler, E., Rowe, C., Coffin, P.O., (2015) Brief Overdose Education is Sufficient for Naloxone Distribution. Drug and Alcohol Dependence [in press]