

# Opioids and Naloxone

## Walk & Talk

The walk from the waiting room to the exam room is an opportunity for medical assistants to “walk and talk” with patients. Here is a script that shows how a medical assistant can educate patients about the importance of having naloxone if they are taking opioids or around other people who might be at risk of an overdose.

**Background:** In 2022, nearly 110,000 Americans died of a drug overdose. Naloxone, also called Narcan, is a nasal spray that can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It is available over the counter or online from most pharmacies. Almost half of people who die from a fatal opioid have someone around them during or right before the overdose. Because of this, the Centers for Disease Control recommends that people who are using prescription or illicit opioids, or are around others who might be using opioids, consider carrying naloxone or having it in their homes. Naloxone blocks the effects of an opioid overdose, allowing crucial minutes for EMS to respond. It won't harm someone if they are not overdosing.

**Medical Assistant:** \*calls patient from the waiting room\*

**Patient:** \*walks back to hallway\*

**Medical Assistant:** Hi, how have you been?

**Patient:** Not too bad.

**Medical Assistant:** Glad to hear. I wanted to give you this card about naloxone. It's a nasal spray, sometimes called Narcan, that you can get at most pharmacies that can reverse an opioid overdose if there is ever an emergency. You may have heard that overdoses have increased a lot in recent years, especially among adolescents. Because of that, the CDC is recommending that people keep naloxone on hand if they are prescribed an opioid or might be around others at risk. Some people keep it in their car or in their medicine cabinet. It's a way to be prepared if someone in your house or neighborhood were to ever have a problem. Of course, you would still call EMS, but naloxone will temporarily block the effects of the opioid. If you want more information about how it works or how to get it, just ask the doctor. \*hands postcard with graphic to patient\*

**Patient:** Okay, thanks. Good to know.

**Medical Assistant:** No problem.



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