


National Overdose Awareness Day



The world's largest annual campaign to end overdose, remember without stigma those who have died and acknowledge the grief of family and friends left behind.

What is an overdose?

An overdose occurs when a person has more of a drug (or combination of drugs) in their body than the body can cope with. All drugs can cause an overdose, including medication prescribed by a doctor. It is important to know the right amount and the right time to take your medication. It is also vital to know what drugs should not be mixed, and to seek help if you feel you are not in control of your drug use.

Can you get a brain injury from an overdose?

All drug misuse can lead to brain injury. Hypoxic brain injury, which is caused by a lack of oxygen to the brain, is an under-reported consequence of overdose. This can lead to coma, seizures and death. The long-term consequences of hypoxia depend on how long the brain is without an adequate supply of oxygen. The longer a person is not breathing, the more damage is being done to their brain.

A brain injury can result in mild to severe impairment of:

- Movement, balance and co-ordination.
- Senses such as hearing or vision.
- Spoken and written communication.
- Thinking, concentration and memory.
- In severe cases, brain injuries from overdoses can leave people in a vegetative state.

When should you call an ambulance?

People are often reluctant to call an ambulance for fear of police involvement or concern about the cost of a call-out. However, you should always call an ambulance if you suspect someone is at risk of overdose. In many places, the police will only attend if there is a fatality or other circumstances warranting police attendance, such as a threat to the ambulance crew. Seeking emergency help isn't just for when someone is unconscious.

You should also seek emergency help when someone is:

- Having a seizure.
- Experiencing severe headache.
- Experiencing chest pain.
- Experiencing breathing difficulties.
- Extremely paranoid, agitated and/or confused.

It is not necessary for someone to have all of these signs or symptoms for them to be overdosing. Exhibiting one or two could still mean they are in trouble and need emergency help.



overdoseday.com



Recovery
Resources are
available



[timelycare](https://timelycare.org)