



**DART Prevention Coalition**  
Taking Aim at Substance Use in Ocean County

# What to Know about Overdoses



## What is an Overdose?

An overdose occurs when a person takes more of a substance than their body can safely handle, causing harmful, potentially life-threatening effects.

### Substances commonly overdosed on can include:

- Alcohol
- Cannabis (also known as marijuana)
- Opioids
- Over-the-counter medications
- Prescription medications

### It's not just opioids that can lead to an overdose.

Polysubstance overdoses — overdoses caused by a combination of substances — have increased. It's important to remember that overdoses can be caused by substances other than opioids or by a combination of substances..

## Common Signs of an Overdose

- Slow, shallow or no breathing
- Loss of consciousness
- Unresponsive or an inability to wake up
- Seizures
- Faint or irregular heartbeat
- Nausea, vomiting or confusion

## Risk of an Overdose from Cannabis

Adults and children can overdose on food or drinks infused with cannabis, known as edibles. Edibles pose a unique risk for several reasons, including:

- There is a greater chance of poisoning due to higher concentrations of THC, the mind-altering compound in the cannabis plant.
- The amount of THC, also known as the concentration or strength, of edibles is difficult to measure accurately.
- The packaging of some edibles mimics the appearance of candy or snacks that appeal to children and can lead to accidental ingestion. These edibles must be stored safely, as children who ingest THC-containing products can become very sick.

## Overdose Prevention Tips

- Use medications only as directed and only take medications prescribed to you.
- Store all medications, edibles and other substances securely — especially away from children.
- Talk openly about the risks of substance use with family and friends.
- Know the signs of overdose and be ready to act!

## How to Respond to an Overdose

- Call 911 immediately.
- Administer naloxone (Narcan) if an opioid overdose is suspected — available anonymously and for free for individuals 14 years or older at many major pharmacies.
- Stay with the person until help arrives.



### Get naloxone for free!

Find out more about NJ's Naloxone365 Program by scanning the QR code or visiting [nj.gov/humanservices/stopoverdoses/](https://nj.gov/humanservices/stopoverdoses/)

**Always call 911 before administering naloxone.**

## Substance Use Support

If you are using substances and want help stopping, please contact our Peer Recovery Program at **848-303-0008** for recovery support services. If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call **911**.

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