

# Take-home naloxone: A brief primer for ED clinicians

---

**EDs can reduce opioid overdose deaths by distributing take-home naloxone (THN) kits.**

Patients at high risk for opioid overdose should routinely be given THN kits when discharged from the ED (see enclosed briefing note).

**EDs can receive a monthly supply of THN kits for free from the Ontario Naloxone Program (ONP).**

The ONP provides both injectable and nasal spray naloxone. The following conditions remove traditional barriers to distributing kits to those most in need:

- No prescription, medical directive, or delegation is required to distribute these THN kits.
- THN kits should be stored in the ED for easy access.
- THN kits may be distributed by any ED staff, including social workers or peer workers.
- THN kits can be given to the patient or to the patient's family or friends.

**THN kits should be given to all people at risk for overdose, regardless of their reason for ED visit or hospital admission.** Examples include:

- Fentanyl or heroin use.
- History of overdoses.
- Household member or partner who uses illicit opioids.
- On a high dose of prescription opioids.

## What to say when giving patients or family a THN kit:

1. Naloxone will reverse the effects of an overdose, just like an EpiPen reverses an anaphylactic reaction.
2. You can prevent overdose death if you always use with a companion, and if you carry a kit with you.
3. This pamphlet explains what to do if someone has overdosed.
4. [If they have an opioid use disorder:] The best way to prevent overdose death is methadone or buprenorphine treatment. Here is the contact information of our local RAAM clinic. A list of RAAM clinics is available at <http://www.metaphi.ca/>

Created by METAPHI. Adapted in part from *Naloxone: It saves lives. What you need to know.* Ontario Pharmacists Association. Permission to freely print, copy and adapt materials to individual settings.