



Public Safety Announcement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Recognizing Opioid Overdose and What to Do

The misuse of prescription medication and opioid-based drugs has increased significantly over the years to become a public health concern in Connecticut. This misuse or abuse includes taking these medications in higher doses than prescribed, for a purpose other than that for which it was prescribed, or taking a medication that was prescribed for another person or obtained off the streets. Opioid overdose is often characterized by a decrease in breathing rate which if not quickly addressed leads to death.

Greenwich Police is using a multi-pronged strategy to address the issue: providing life-saving efforts in the field; connecting users to addiction services; arrests of those manufacturing and distributing drugs; and education. These initiatives are being done in conjunction with partners in the medical, education and counseling fields.

Common Risk Factors for Opioid Overdose:

- Mixing opioids with other drugs, particularly alcohol or sedatives
- Resumption of use after a period of abstinence from opioid use, such as a release from a rehabilitation center
- Elderly persons may forget that they already took their medication and accidentally re-take the same medication
- Younger age, specifically the teens or early 20s exposed to peer pressure or a social environment where there is drug use.

Signs of an opioid overdose:

- Face is extremely pale and/or clammy to the touch
- Body is limp
- Fingernails or lips have a blue or purple cast
- Vomiting or making gurgling noises
- Cannot be awakened from sleep or is unable to speak
- Breathing is very slow or stopped
- Heartbeat is very slow or stopped

What should I do if I see an overdose?

- Call 911 immediately!
- Support the person's breathing
- Administer naloxone (Narcan) if you have it
- Lay the person on their side once they have resumed breathing
- Stay with the person until the ambulance arrives

