

## Naloxone

### What is Naloxone?

Opioid medications (including morphine, hydromorphone and fentanyl) are useful for managing symptoms like pain or shortness of breath. Like all medications, opioid medications can cause side effects, including slowing down breathing. When starting a new opioid or when providing symptom management changes, doses of opioid medications may need to be adjusted quickly, as the team works to find a dose that provides symptom relief, with minimal or a tolerable amount of side effects. However, occasionally, this can cause more side effects than expected or is tolerable.

**Naloxone** is a fast-acting medication used to temporarily reverse some of the effects of an opioid. It can be used when too much of an opioid medication has caused very slow and shallow breathing or breathing to stop. Naloxone will only act on opioid receptors and will have no effect on reversing side effects from drugs that are not opioids (e.g., stimulants, benzodiazepines).

### How is it given?

This medication is given intranasally (into the nose). To give the dose, the injectable form is used and administered with a special MAD (mucosal atomizer device) to disperse the liquid into the nostril (nare).

Naloxone can also be given as an injection (into the muscles, under the skin or intravenous) However, for use in the home setting, we are not utilizing this method.

### What is the dose?

The dose is based on your child's weight. You will be given an information sheet with the appropriate dosing specific to your child. The dose started with is small to start reversing some of the effects of the opioid but also to try to avoid the symptoms listed below if possible. However, you may be required to give more than one dose, ***so always call the Canuck Place 24/7 line before administering.***



### **How can I tell if my child needs it?**

If you find that your child has any of the following in a *short time frame* after giving opioids that is ***different from their norm***:

1. Respirations have slowed significantly (less than 8/min) or stopped
2. Color change (pale/blue/purple tinge) around the mouth
3. Difficult to rouse or unresponsive

***Call Canuck Place 24/7 line before administering.***

### **What are the side effects of Naloxone?**

More common side effects:

- Headache
- Joint or muscle pain

If your child has required regular use of opioids for effective pain management they may experience:

- Increase in pain
- Muscle aches/cramping
- Agitation
- Anxiety

Naloxone use is extremely rare but is important to have in your home for safety reasons. The dose provided is specific to your child and does not apply to other family members. *If there is accidental ingestion by another family member, call 911 immediately.*

***If you have any questions call a Canuck Place Nurse at 604-742-3478 and for immediate assistance call the Kid's Counter at 604-742-3475***