



# Canada's National Consensus Guidelines for Naloxone Prescribing by Pharmacists

## More must be done about Canada's opioid crisis

Almost  
**1 in 9**  
(4.4 million)  
Canadians were  
prescribed opioids  
in 2020

In 2020,  
there were  
**6,421**  
opioid-related  
deaths in Canada



**1/4 to 1/3**  
of opioid-related deaths  
in Ontario involve  
prescription opioids

The consensus guidelines recommend that **pharmacists provide naloxone proactively** to all patients receiving opioids.

Naloxone can be used to  
**help reverse an opioid  
overdose until  
medical help arrives,**  
and is available in  
both a nasal spray or  
injectable version.



A 2019 study in  
Ontario showed that  
only **1.6%** of patients  
receiving an opioid  
prescription were  
also dispensed  
a naloxone kit.

Until 2020, national guidelines for naloxone dispensing practices did not exist,  
meaning pharmacists did not have guidance to dispense naloxone to all at-risk patients.

*Naloxone is not a replacement for emergency medical care.*

According to the **Canadian national consensus guidelines**  
published in the Canadian Pharmacists Journal

**All patients receiving  
an opioid prescription  
should be dispensed a  
naloxone kit**

**All patients should also  
be counselled by a  
pharmacist**

**Patient follow-ups are  
recommended at 3 months  
and 1 year after dispensing**

*\* Ongoing yearly follow-ups are also recommended*

Pharmacists play a critical role in helping to reduce the rate of opioid related harms.  
Every patient with an opioid prescription should be informed and counselled about naloxone.

Consult the respective naloxone product monographs for indication, contraindications, warnings, precautions and dosing guidelines.

#### Sources:

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