FACT SHEET

EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE PROVIDERS

OPIOID OVERDOSE

- The nationwide opioid overdose epidemic has stimulated questions and responses from families, communities, governing bodies, and emergency medical care providers regarding overdose treatment methods, particularly, the use of Naloxone (Narcan).
- Rescue breathing can save a life when other forms of treatment are not immediately available or enroute. It is very important to support a suspected overdose patient’s breathing until other treatment is available and after Naloxone (Narcan) administration. While the focus has been on availability and administration of Naloxone (Narcan) to assist in reversing the overdose symptoms, all emergency responders utilize department protocols as the standard of care and should initiate primary interventions to assure Airway, Breathing, and Circulation.
- Scope of practice: All currently certified emergency medical care providers in the State of Iowa may use a bag-valve-mask or mouth-mask to support breathing, are CPR certified and may provide Naloxone (Narcan) via auto injector or Intranasal (Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) and Paramedic), additionally, the AEMT and Paramedic may administer Naloxone (Narcan) intramuscularly and intravenously.
  
https://idph.iowa.gov/bets/ems/scope-of-practice

- The Iowa 2018 Adult and Pediatric Statewide EMS Treatment Protocols discuss the use of Naloxone (Narcan) in two areas: Suspected Overdose and Altered Mental Status:
  
https://idph.iowa.gov/BETS/EMS/protocols

Suspected Opioid Overdose:
  
a. Follow Initial Patient Care Protocol
b. Support ventilations via bag-valve-mask and oxygen while preparations are made for Naloxone (Narcan) administration
c. Initial dose of Naloxone (Narcan) 0.4 to 2 mg IV over 15-30 seconds or 0.4 to 4 mg IM, SQ or IN. Repeated doses maybe required

Altered Mental Status:
  
a. Follow Initial Patient Care Protocol
b. Obtain blood glucose
c. If conscious & able to swallow, administer glucose 15 gm by mouth
d. Evaluate the need for Naloxone (Narcan) 0.4 to 2 mg IV over 15-30 seconds or 0.4 to 4 mg IM, SQ or IN. Repeated doses maybe required.

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