



# Naloxone Conversation Starters for Pharmacists <sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

## Why recommend naloxone?

- Co-prescribing naloxone to patients taking opioids has been shown to significantly reduce opioid-related harms.
- Greater access to naloxone has been associated with 63% fewer emergency department visits and 27–46% fewer opioid overdose deaths.  
Source: American Pharmacists Association (APhA)

## Who can benefit from naloxone?

- Patients who present with an opioid prescription.
- Patients with a prescription for  $\geq 50$  morphine milligram equivalents (MME)/day OR long-term opioid use (defined as receiving an opioid on most days during a 90-day period).
- Patients taking opioids in combination with other CNS depressants.

## Naloxone Conversation Starters

Consider the following talking points when discussing co-prescribing naloxone with opioids. This conversation should be patient-centered, so not all talking points will be applicable for every conversation.

1. "Do you have a moment to talk about the opioid medication you are taking to help manage your pain?"
2. "Are you aware of the side effects of opioid pain medications? If not, do you have a few moments to talk today about how you can stay safe while taking opioid pain medications?"
3. "The opioid pain medications you are taking can cause slowed breathing or even death. Naloxone is an antidote that you can keep on hand to reverse a bad reaction if it ever occurs. Would you like to learn more about naloxone today?"
4. "One of the risks with opioid pain medications is that they could cause your breathing to slow or stop completely. Since you are taking an opioid and (benzodiazepine, antidepressant, or sedative) OR an opioid at this dose, there is a greater risk this could happen to you. Would you like to learn more about naloxone, a medication that can keep you safe?"
5. "If opioid pain medications are ingested accidentally, naloxone can help reverse an overdose and save a life."
6. "Having naloxone on hand can help keep you, your friends, and your family safe when you have these opioid pain medications in your household."
7. "Naloxone is the equivalent of an Epi-Pen™ for allergies, although it cannot be self-administered. Would you like to know more about how to use naloxone? Would you like me to review the instructions for the administration of naloxone with you?"

## Sharing Naloxone Resources in Your State

8. "Did you know there is a law in our state allowing you to receive naloxone today without an additional doctor's visit?"
9. "When using opioid pain medications for long periods of time, it is recommended to have naloxone at home. If you are interested, would it be ok if I look into what the cost may be for you today? I can also check to see if you are eligible for any discounts."
10. "If the cost of naloxone is a concern, there is a resource available in our state to obtain a kit for free OR at a lower cost to you."

## Reminders for Pharmacists When Offering Naloxone

- Offer a consultation about naloxone for opioid prescriptions.
- Be sure to advise patients that naloxone can be used to reverse any opioid.
- Tell patients about available statewide programs that offer naloxone for free or at a lower cost.
- Patients may not be comfortable speaking about naloxone due to stigma associated with opioid use.

# Naloxone Conversation Starters for Pharmacists *(continued)*



## Pharmacist Conversation with Pharmacy Technicians

Coach pharmacy technicians to encourage patients to talk to a pharmacist regarding any questions regarding their medications including administration, maximum daily dose, side effects, and storage; and for opioids, the benefits of naloxone.

1. "I notice this is a prescription for an opioid. The pharmacist is available to speak with you about the side effects and safety measures when taking opioids. Would you like to speak with the pharmacist now?"
  - a. If Yes: Refer to pharmacist.
  - b. If No: Remind the patient, they can call the pharmacy to speak with a pharmacist anytime with questions.
2. Remind the patient that naloxone is available at this pharmacy and payment may be required depending on the program(s) offered in your state.

## State-Specific Naloxone Resources

Connecticut	<a href="https://www.ct.gov/health/na/na-ct">Naloxone (ct.gov)</a>
Delaware	<a href="https://www.delaware.gov/health/na/">Where to get Narcan   Help is Here Delaware</a>
District of Columbia	<a href="https://www.dmh.dc.gov/na/">Where Can I Get Naloxone in DC?   dmh</a>
Kentucky	<a href="https://www.ky.gov/na/">Naloxone Locator - Hope and Help (ky.gov)</a>
Maine	<a href="https://www.maine.gov/health/na/">Get Maine Naloxone – Find Narcan® / Naloxone in Maine</a>
Maryland	<a href="https://www.maryland.gov/na/">Maryland Department of Health Home</a>
Massachusetts	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/na/">Getting Naloxone from a Pharmacy   Mass.gov</a>
Minnesota	<a href="https://www.state.mn.us/na/">Nonfatal Opioid Overdose: Naloxone - Minnesota Department of Health (state.mn.us)</a>
New Hampshire	<a href="https://www.nh.gov/na/">Avoid Overdose   The Doorway (nh.gov)</a>
New Jersey	<a href="https://www.nj.gov/na/">Department of Health   Integrated Health   Naloxone (Narcan®) Distribution and Training (nj.gov)</a>
New York	<a href="https://www.ny.gov/na/">Availability of Naloxone in Pharmacies (ny.gov)</a> <a href="https://www.ny.gov/na/">New York State's Opioid Overdose Prevention Program (ny.gov)</a>
Ohio	<a href="https://www.ohio.gov/na/">Project DAWN   Ohio Department of Health</a>
Rhode Island	<a href="https://www.ri.gov/na/">Get Naloxone – Prevent Overdose RI</a>
Vermont	<a href="https://www.healthvermont.gov/na/">Opioid Overdose Prevention   Vermont Department of Health (healthvermont.gov)</a>
Wisconsin	<a href="https://www.wisconsin.gov/na/">Dose of Reality: Safer Use/Harm Reduction   Wisconsin Department of Health Services</a>

<sup>1</sup> Intermountain Pain Management Services. (2020) Naloxone Conversation Starters.

<https://selecthealth.org/providers/pharmacy/-/media/cfb2d62d3d5b47e9b0992b603261a97c.ashx>

<sup>2</sup> Pain, Palliative Care, and Addiction Special Interest Group (PPCA SIG) in the APhA Academy of Pharmacy Practice & Management. (2019) Let's talk about naloxone – it saves lives.

<https://georgiagerontologysociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/LetsTalkAboutNaloxone-1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Indiana State Department of Health.(2018) Pharmacists and naloxone: Let's talk about it!

[https://www.in.gov/health/overdose-prevention/files/75\\_Pharmacists-and-Naloxone.pdf](https://www.in.gov/health/overdose-prevention/files/75_Pharmacists-and-Naloxone.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Learn How to Start Conversations About Naloxone

<https://naspa.us/2019/05/learn-how-to-start-conversations-about-naloxone>

### Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/naloxone/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/patients/preventing-an-opioid-overdose-tip-card-a.pdf>