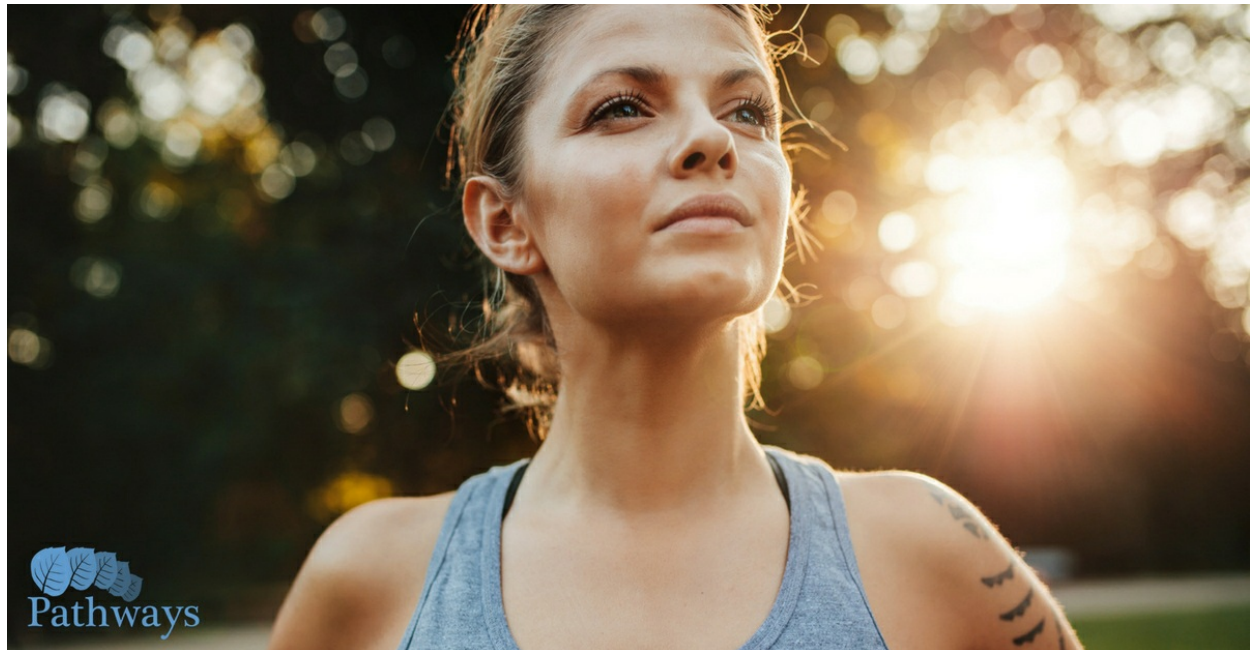


# The Basics of Overdose

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 [pathwaysreallife.com/the-basics-of-overdose](https://pathwaysreallife.com/the-basics-of-overdose)



According to the 2014 statistics from the Utah Department of Health, 32% of Utah adults had been on prescribed opioid pain medication. Drug poisoning deaths in Utah have **surpassed** deaths due to other causes such as firearms, motor vehicle accidents, and falls. Misuse of addictive prescription medications such as opioids can result in **personal and legal consequences**. **It is estimated that 23 Utahns die every month from prescription drug overdoses.**

Here is an overdose 101 detailed look at the basics of overdose and **what to do if someone overdoses**. Below are some overdose basics to aid in understanding the topic better;

## What is an Overdose?

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A drug overdose occurs when one takes a drug or a combination of different medications above and beyond the prescribed limit. Overdose signs differ with the type of drug used. As such, **it is vital to know the right amount and time of taking your medication to avoid an overdose.**

## Types of Drugs and Signs of Overdose

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### Opioids and Depressants

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Heroin and other pharmaceutical opioids such as *Endone*, *benzodiazepines*, and *barbiturates* produce a calming effect by slowing down the central nervous system. **Depressants slow down the vital activities of the body such as breathing and the heart rate.** These substances can be prescribed to a patient who has a sleeping problem and for purposes of relieving pain. However, **when taken in large amounts or mixed they**

**can cause permanent brain damage and overdose**, which will lead to depressing normal body functions such as breathing and eventual slowing down of the heart rate that can result in death.

## Alcohol

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Alcohol is used recreationally to produce a calming effect by slowing down the central nervous system. Although most people don't consider extreme consumption of alcohol as an overdose, **alcohol is a strong depressant** that can lead to an overdose if consumed uncontrollably. For example, **binge drinking can lead to acute alcohol poisoning**.

## Stimulants

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An overdose of stimulants such as *amphetamines* can increase the **risk of stroke and seizures**.

## Tolerance and Half-life

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It is possible to develop tolerance when using a drug regularly. Although a person who has developed tolerance will need more of the drug to get the same effect, he/she can also lose the tolerance if he doesn't use the drug for a while. Also, **if someone takes the usual amount of prescription medication after a break from using the drug, it could also lead to an overdose**. That is why using drugs after periods of abstinence such as release from prison or after leaving a drug rehab center can cause an overdose.

Half-life is the time it takes for a particular drug's strength or effect to drop to half of its original dose. Benzodiazepines drugs are known to have a longer half-life. In other words, **if an individual used the drug yesterday, he/she may still have enough in the system to get an overdose, if the same drug is used today**.

## Drug Overdose First Aid

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Drug overdose symptoms depend on a range of factors, such as medical history, type of drug used and amount of drug taken. **Don't assume someone who has overdosed is asleep because it can take several hours for someone who has overdosed to die**. This is a medical emergency that necessitates **immediate medical attention**. Call an ambulance, if you suspect that someone has a drug overdose.

## Receive Support in Addiction Recovery at Pathways Real Life Recovery Center in Utah

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If you or your loved one is battling a drug addiction, contact Pathways Real Life Recovery in Utah. We offer cutting-edge medical support, behavioral counseling and addiction recovery treatment for all kinds of addictions. **We believe in honesty, gratitude, action, and integrity in delivering mental health counseling services in a friendly and respectful environment**. We work with insurance and offer financing so that you or your loved one can still get the help you deserve. Give us a call at 801-828-2701 to learn more!

