

Press Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:
Dr. Sharon Harris 516- 676-2008
safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: On the Signs of an Opioid Overdose

With any type of medication, the risk of developing a drug's side effect can be somewhat terrifying. Side effects can be minor, severe or even life threatening. When an individual is taking extremely high doses of medication, that was not properly prescribed to them, severe consequences can ensue. For instance, abusing prescription medications can cause an individual not only to get high but to develop other medical problems. The human body during an overdose undergoes high levels of stress before it goes into shock and then even death.

The signs of an overdose can vary depending upon the amount an individual has taken, as well as their overall condition. There are two reasons that an overdose may happen; accidental or intentional misuse of an opioid. Some of the common drugs that an individual may become addicted to are oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, as well as heroin which is also an opioid.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), more than 72,000 Americans died of an overdose in 2017. Of those, 15,958 were deaths that involved Heroin.

During a Heroin overdose an individual forgets to breathe, the heart starts malfunctioning, the nervous system shuts down and fluid backs up in your airways. In an accidental overdose, the most common pain reliever used is paracetamol which does not require a prescription. Signs of an overdose with this opioid include drowsiness, coma, seizures, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting.

In an intentional overdose the side effects are somewhat the same but could be worse. A few opioid side effects include but are not limited to drowsiness, mental fog, nausea, and constipation. In an overdose, it is very common that an individual's breathing will slow down which can lead to death if not treated with Narcan right away. If an individual's face is extremely pale or feels clammy to the touch, body is limp, fingernails or lips turn purple, start vomiting or is not responding - medical attention is needed right away.

After an overdose occurs and the individual is alert and responsive, it is important to follow up with treatment so this does not happen again. One type of treatment used for addiction is called Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). MAT will help the individual to stop using the drug, cope with the cravings as well as get through the withdrawal. This is done with counseling and support from family, friends and staff.

To prevent becoming addicted to an Opioid, it is best to follow medical personnel's instructions on recommended use. Also get help immediately if tolerance is being suspected. A discussion regarding a history of substance abuse in the family should transpire as research demonstrates Genetics play a major role in addiction.

Seeing an individual with signs of an overdose can be extremely terrifying to witness. It is important to stay calm during this situation and get the proper medical assistance needed to help. Narcan should be administered immediately to reverse the effects of the opioid medication taken. Call an ambulance. Also bring the pill containers, if possible, to the hospital so the health care professionals know exactly what the individual has taken.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) a United States federal-government research institute whose mission is to "lead the Nation in bringing the power of science to bear on drug abuse and addiction." For more information about NIDA please visit <http://www.drugabuse.gov>.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.