

Overdose and Brain Injury

Little known facts: In an overdose situation, if your brain has been deprived of oxygen for 3 minutes or more, there is a chance you have sustained a brain injury – which could affect your recovery plan going forward. The more overdoses you experience, the more likely you are to sustain a brain injury. This type of brain injury is often referred to as an anoxic brain injury.



When an opioid enters the brain, it affects many different parts.

Too much opioid can affect the brain stem, which controls some things our bodies do automatically like breathing and swallowing. An opioid overdose can slow your breathing or even stop it all together. This can cause a brain injury, especially if you have overdosed more than once.

A brain injury can range from minor to severe.

Here are some signs of a brain injury:

- Difficulty remembering things
- Difficulty concentrating, learning, and understanding new information
- Increased depression, anxiety, and mood swings
- Feeling overly tired
- Having frequent headaches, changes in vision and/or coordination

Did you know people who sustain a brain injury during an overdose will likely need a different treatment plan in recovery? Their cognitive functions have changed; they may no longer be able to respond the same way they did before the brain injury.

We are seeing a significant increase in brain injuries among people who overdose – a “silent epidemic.” The Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire is a resource for help.

**For more information, you can contact the
Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire
(603) 225-8400
or
Family Helpline - (800)-773-8400**

Call 9-1-1 -- Every second matters.

Do you think that you or someone you know may be living with an anoxic brain injury from surviving an overdose?

If you have had an overdose and are noticing any of the symptoms, talk to your doctor as soon as possible for an evaluation, and talk with your counselor or recovery coach about it.

You are not alone and you can find help!

If you or someone close to you uses opioids

- ▶ Carry naloxone and never use opioids alone.
- ▶ Stagger use with a friend, never share works.
- ▶ Know the signs of an overdose and know how to use your naloxone.
- ▶ Learn rescue breathing and carry a rescue breathing mask so you can help someone who is overdosing.

- ▶ Make sure someone who has survived an overdose is seen by a doctor as soon as possible.
- ▶ You can get free naloxone at your local Recovery Center, at your local Doorway, or through the mail.

www.nhrecoveryhub.org/naloxone-narcan-in-nh

www.thedoorway.nh.gov/avoid-overdose

www.naloxoneforall.org/newhampshire



BIANH - 52 Pleasant Street - Concord, NH 03301
(603) 225-8400 or Helpline (800) 773-8400
www.bianh.org