

# Corrections Staff Healthcare Pocket Guide

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NCDHHS CORRECTIONS TEAM  
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE BRANCH



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health

# OVERDOSE

## **Signs and Symptoms:**

- Constricted (pinpoint) pupils
- Chest pain
- Severe difficulty breathing, shallow breathing, or complete cessation of breath
- Gurgling sounds that indicate the person's airway is blocked
- Blue lips or fingers
- Nausea or vomiting
- Disorientation or confusion
- Tremors, convulsions, or seizures
- Altered level of consciousness

**If difficulty arousing, excessive drowsiness or unresponsive: CONSIDER naloxone,** when available, per facility protocol

# STIMULANT OVERAMPING

## **Signs and Symptoms:**

- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Chest pain
- Increased temperature/Sweating
- Rapid Heart Rate
- Shortness of Breath
- Severe Headache
- Increased blood pressure
- Anxiety/Panic
- Paranoia and/or Hallucinations
- Agitation or Aggressiveness
- Restlessness or Irritability
- Enhanced environmental awareness
- Insomnia
- Limb jerking or rigidity

# WITHDRAWAL

## **Signs and Symptoms:**

- Anxiety, panic attacks, restlessness, irritability
- Social isolation, lack of enjoyment, fatigue, poor appetite
- Insomnia, difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Poor concentration, poor memory
- Headaches, dizziness
- Chest tightness, difficulty breathing
- Racing heart, skipped beats, palpitations
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach aches
- Muscle tension, twitches, tremors, shakes, muscle aches
- Sweating, tingling
- Seizures

## **If suspected overdose OR withdrawal:**

- Follow facility policy for Medical Emergency

# MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

## **Warning Signs of a Mental Health Crisis:**

- Not performing daily tasks like bathing, brushing teeth, changing clothes
- Sudden extreme mood changes (from one extreme to the other)
- Increased agitation (verbal threats, violent, out-of-control behavior, destroys property)
- Abusive behavior to self and/or others (substance use or self-harm)
- Isolation (Refusing to come out of cell including time for medications, meals, and rec)
- Symptoms of paranoia/psychosis: loss of touch with reality, difficulty recognizing staff/cellmate, hearing voices, seeing things that aren't there
- Increased energy level, inability to stay still, pacing

# MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

## **Warning Signs of Suicide:**

- Talk of Suicide
- Depression (withdrawal from people, lack of energy, frequent crying, appetite loss)
- Excessive feelings of shame, failure, hopelessness
- Suddenly calm excessively happy after being depressed
- Talking as if they're saying goodbye or going away forever
- Taking steps to tie up loose ends, like organizing personal papers or paying off debts
- Stockpiling pills or obtaining a weapon
- Giving away possessions
- Asking questions about death, estates, wills
- Attempting to obscure view into their cell, blocking windows with paper, towels, etc.

# MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

## **Responding To Mental Health Crisis:**

- Keep your voice calm
- Use direct, short phrases and be patient with their response
- Listen to the person
- Avoid continuous eye contact
- Announce actions before initiating them
- Don't try to argue
- Keep stimulation level low
- Take talking of self-harm seriously
- Avoid touching the person unless necessary for safety
- Give them space, don't make them feel trapped
- Express support and concern
- Ask how you can help
- Be patient

**Follow facility protocol for intervention if necessary**

# COVID PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Support staff and residents to stay up-to-date with COVID vaccine
- Improve ventilation
- Provide testing for COVID-19, when needed
- Wear masks or respirators and PPE, as appropriate
- Promote Infection Control and facility cleaning
- Implement post-exposure guidance
- Implement isolation guidance
- Support access to treatment, as needed
- Monitor and communicate potential outbreaks or needs
- Social distance where possible



# COVID

## **Symptoms:**

- Fever or chills
- Cough or sore throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Headache or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- New or worsening “allergies”

## **Seek Emergency treatment if have:**

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds

# MATERNAL EMERGENCIES

## **Maternal Emergencies (during pregnancy and up to 1 year after delivery):**

- Headache that won't go away or gets worse with time
- Dizziness or fainting
- Changes in vision
- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Extreme swelling of hands/face
- Thoughts of harming yourself or baby
- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain or fast beating heart
- Severe belly pain that doesn't go away
- Baby's movement stop or decrease
- Severe swelling, redness, or pain in leg/arm
- Severe nausea and throwing up
- Vaginal bleeding or fluid leaking during pregnancy
- Heavy vaginal bleeding or discharge after pregnancy
- Overwhelming tiredness

# MEDICAL EMERGENCY

## **Medical Emergency requiring Immediate Intervention:**

- Bleeding that will not stop
- Sudden change in breathing (difficulty breathing, shortness of breath)
- Change in mental status (such as unusual behavior, confusion, difficulty arousing)
- Chest pain
- Choking
- Coughing up or vomiting blood
- Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Head or spine injury
- New paralysis or facial drooping
- Stab wounds, burns, smoke inhalation
- Sudden dizziness, weakness, or change in vision
- Swallowing a poisonous substance



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