



## Accurate Clinic

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### **Naloxone (Narcan®)**

#### **For the Emergency Management of Opioid Overdose**

Due to the nationwide increase in accidental or unintentional overdoses from opioid pain medications, it is now recommended that anyone prescribed opioid pain medications be provided with an emergency treatment option to prevent unnecessary death from overdose. The purpose in providing this emergency treatment option to pain management patients is not based on the likelihood of the patient overdosing since they are well-educated and informed regarding the safe dosing of opioids. Rather, it is related to the accidental, unexpected or unintended ingestion of the medications by someone else in the household such as a guest, family member or visitor to the home that somehow acquires access to the medication. Even a family dog or cat!

Similar to the concept of providing patients with a history of life-threatening allergic reactions with "Epi-pen" kits for use in a life-threatening allergic reaction, patients treated with opioids can be prescribed pre-filled syringes containing **naloxone** (Narcan®). In the event of overdose, a lay-person can inject the victim with the naloxone which reverses the overdose effects of the opioid, including impaired breathing and low blood pressure. This action when performed in a timely manner can save someone's life by providing the time necessary for EMTs to arrive and provide definitive management for the victim. And yes, the medicine is safe and effective for dogs also.

The prefilled syringes cost about \$20 and it is recommended that every patient prescribed opioids in monthly quantities consider keeping one in their home. Our staff can provide instructions for the easy administration of the medication.

Signs and symptoms of opioid overdose may include:

- Cold, clammy skin
- Weakness
- Constricted pupils
- Hypotension (low blood pressure)
- Loss of consciousness/unresponsiveness
- Respiratory depression

Please discuss any questions you may have with our staff.