

Township of Manalapan

BOARD OF HEALTH

120 Route 522 • Manalapan, NJ 07726 • 732-446-8345 • Fax 732-446-1576

Website: www.mtnj.org



August 31st is International Overdose Awareness Day

The Impact Drugs Have on the World

In 2012, there were 183,000 drug-related deaths in the world. Most of these deaths were overdoses. In 2011, 41,340 overdose deaths occurred in the United States. These numbers increase every year, making drugs more fatal than vehicular accidents in the United States. Opioids are responsible for the most overdose deaths. These are powerful and extremely addictive drugs that are taking many lives. Not even New Jersey is safe from this dilemma. Since 2011, there have been over a thousand overdose deaths every year. Most of those who have passed away in New Jersey overdosed on opioids such as heroin and fentanyl.

The Purpose of International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD)

IOAD is a global event held every year. It aims to “to **raise awareness** of overdose and reduce the stigma of a drug-related death. It also acknowledges the grief felt by families and friends **remembering** those who have met with death or permanent injury as a result of drug overdose.” IOAD helps educate individuals and communities about the dangers of drugs. On the event’s website, www.overdoseday.com/, there are resources for learning about threat of drug overdose deaths and ways to get involved.

How to Be Involved

On the IOAD website, there is an events page. There are multiple events in New Jersey or in neighboring states. These could be events for the families and friends who have lost overdose victims or seminars to educate the public about this growing problem in the country. The website also provides a way to get involved in social media. It provides ways to open discussion on Twitter and Facebook. IOAD also encourages to wear silver. Silver symbolizes awareness of overdose and its effects and those who have lost their lives to drugs.

International Overdose Awareness Day brings a growing and relevant problem to attention. Drugs are taking many lives and this day motivates the public to take action and prevent these deaths.

Why Are There So Many Overdose Deaths?

There are many ways to overdose. Anyone can become addicted to substances like opioids. Some might receive medical treatment and then opioids to relieve their pain. If a doctor prescribes opioids repeatedly for pain, there is a chance that the patient will become addicted. This will create a craving for stronger opioids. In other cases, some might build up tolerance to other illegal drugs and move on to stronger ones such as opioids. One can overdose when taking a substance that he or she is not used to. When an addict ceases to use a substance for a period of time and then relapses, continuing to take the same amount of substance as he or she did before, there is a high risk of overdose. During abstinence, a user will lose tolerance to substances. When a user relapses, they can overdose on an amount of the substance that they were used to. Overdoses are very serious, and they can kill a person within minutes.

Signs of an Overdose

- Slow or shallow breathing
- Very sleepy or unable to talk, unconscious
- Skin color is blue or grayish, with dark lips and fingernails
- Snoring or gurgling sounds

Take Action

If it appears that a person has overdosed, follow these steps:

1. **Lightly** tap, shake, or shout at the person. If no response, rub your knuckles on the person's breastbone.
2. If there is a response, keep the person awake.
3. Call 911. If you have naloxone (narcan), administer it by following the instructions on the package. Naloxone is an opioid antagonist and is used to reverse an opioid overdose.
4. If there is little or no response, begin opioid overdose resuscitation. This involves checking to see if the person is breathing properly. If the person's breathing is shallow or non-existent, skin color is blue/gray, or lips/fingernails are dark, perform mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing. If a person has no pulse, perform CPR with rescue breathing.
5. If you have to leave or the overdose victim is vomiting, leave the person on his or her side.

It is necessary for the overdose victim to be in an emergency room as soon as possible. Even if the person has taken naloxone, the effect of opioids last for a much longer time than the fifteen to twenty minutes that naloxone works for.

For more information contact the Manalapan Township Health Department:

Hours:

Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location:

Manalapan Town Hall
120 Route 522 & Taylors Mills Road, Manalapan, NJ 07726

Phone: (732) 446-8345

Fax: (732) 446-1576