

Narcan is Over the Counter – Now what?!

Many of you may have heard or even seen that Narcan is now available over the counter at many pharmacies – this is great news and should make access to Narcan more widely available. Narcan being over the counter has also resulted in many questions that we are going to do our best to answer:

Will Arlington County Community Services Board/Dept. of Human Services still dispense free narcan?

YES– we continue to receive Narcan/Naloxone from the Virginia Dept. of Health (VDH) for free to dispense to our community for free.

Can people take it off a pharmacy shelf in the event of an emergency?

No – that would be considered theft. We are continuing to work to get opioid overdose emergency kits into more public places and will explore any partnerships we can set up with pharmacies about how individuals can access free naloxone/narcan.



Can people still use their insurance to buy it?

For now, the answer seems to be yes. It seems as if some pharmacies will continue to have the prescription naloxone/narcan behind the counter (that is available without an actual doctor's written prescription, using the [statewide standing order](#)). The prescription naloxone/narcan can be run through insurance. We recommend that you first call the pharmacy to ensure this is an option at your local pharmacy.

What happens if someone goes into a pharmacy and does not see it on the shelf?

They should ask the pharmacist if they have it available behind the counter. If the pharmacy does not have it at all, they should encourage their pharmacy to begin stocking it but, in the meantime, can always [request it through us for free](#).

Do all pharmacies have Narcan in stock?

The answer to this seems to be “no” and it is worth noting that it seems like pharmacy technicians and store staff have varying degrees of understanding and information about OTC Narcan. This is all brand new, so please expect some hiccups and bumps along the way. If you run into issues, feel free to contact us at 571-302-0327 to assist you in navigating.

*****Please remember, Narcan/Naloxone is always available FREE through Arlington County. You can visit our Emergency Services Department 24/7 to obtain Naloxone/Narcan and Fentanyl Test Strips for free. Emergency services is located at 2120 Washington Blvd. on the side of the building.***

If you have other questions, please reach out to us and we'll do our best to answer them. For now, we'll leave you with a photo of our official Narcan mascot, Nutmeg, and a friendly reminder that naloxone/narcan is safe and effective to use on pets.

