

Recognition of Opioid Overdose

Classic triad:

- Coma (depressed mental status)
- Pinpoint pupils
- Respiratory depression (<12 breaths/min in adults)
- All three may not be present
- Patients in recovery can be prescribed opiates when benefit outweighs risk (such as major surgery, trauma), but there must be careful planning, open discussion, safe dispensing and close monitoring.
- Increasingly opioid deaths involve fentanyl, either alone or in combination with heroin (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/11/07/overdose-deaths-mass-continue-surge/z9AdKhXF43NAhngHYvTguO/story.html>)