

How to Get Naloxone (Narcan) at a Pharmacy in Erie County: A Simple Guide for Patients, Clients, and Community Members

Naloxone can reverse an opioid overdose and save a life. This guide shows you how to get it quickly and affordably in Erie County pharmacies.

1. Naloxone is widely available – and you do NOT need a prescription

You can get naloxone at any pharmacy in New York State.

Important points:

- You do not need a prescription
- Pharmacists can give naloxone under the New York State Standing Order (if their pharmacy is enrolled)
- Some pharmacies also sell naloxone over-the-counter (OTC) on the shelf
- Many do not stock it on the shelf – this is normal. You can still get it at the pharmacy counter.

Tip: Asking your provider to send a prescription can make it easier. It triggers billing and prevents OTC charges. You can simply ask your doctor, nurse practitioner, PA, or prescriber to send a prescription for naloxone to your pharmacy.

2. If you have insurance:

Go directly to the pharmacy counter and say:

“Can you please give me naloxone and bill my insurance? Can you also try the naloxone copay assistance program (N-CAP) to lower my copay?”

Important:

- Even if naloxone is OTC, bring it to the counter and ask to put it through insurance
- N-CAP can reduce most insurance copays to \$0 at pharmacies enrolled in the program
- This helps avoid paying full price

→ What to do if the pharmacy says they *cannot* use N-CAP

This happens sometimes — and you can still advocate for yourself.

If staff say N-CAP isn't available or can't be used, you can say:

“My understanding is that pharmacies enrolled in N-CAP can apply it when billing my insurance. Can you check if your pharmacy is enrolled or able to re-enroll today?”

If they say they are enrolled but still cannot apply it:

“Can you try running it through my insurance under the standing order? N-CAP should cover what my insurance doesn't.”

If they say the product isn't covered:

“Can you check if another naloxone product is covered? N-CAP usually applies to the standing-order formulations.”

If the pharmacy is not enrolled in N-CAP and cannot re-enroll:

- You may still use insurance, but the copay may be higher.
- You can ask:
 - “Is there another pharmacy nearby that participates in N-CAP?”
 - Where can I get lower or no cost naloxone today?

3. If you do NOT have insurance:

You can still get naloxone.

- OTC naloxone usually costs \$40-60.
- Grocery stores *may* be higher; independent pharmacies *may* be a little lower.

You also have free or low-cost options through:

- The Erie County Department of Health
- Local harm reduction or community organizations
- Distribution events and outreach programs

Ask any provider, case manager, or outreach worker to help you find free naloxone.

4. If naloxone is NOT on the store shelf

(This is very common – don’t worry)

Go to the pharmacy counter and ask:

“Do you have naloxone available behind the counter?”

If they say they don’t have it:

- Ask if they can order it (arrives quickly, often next day)
- Ask if nearby store locations have it
- Ask where in the community you can get naloxone today

5. If the pharmacy says OTC is the “only option”:

You can reply:

“Can you please put it through the standing order and bill my insurance and N-CAP instead?”

This prevents you from paying full price

6: Counseling: What You Should Expect From a Pharmacist

New York State requires pharmacists to offer brief education when giving naloxone. They should explain:

- What naloxone is and how it works
- Risk factors for opioid overdose
- How to recognize an overdose
- Steps to respond, including 911
- How to use the device
- Where to find treatment or support.

If this does not happen, you can ask:

“Can you show me how to use it and what to do in an overdose? I want to be prepared.”

Key Takeaway

You deserve easy, judgment-free access to naloxone. Pharmacists are trained to be supportive, helpful, and nonjudgmental. They are ready to:

- Help you get naloxone affordably
- Show you how to use it
- Answer questions & make sure you feel prepared and safe

Some people leave the pharmacy without naloxone simply because they didn’t know what to ask for. This guide gives you exact words to use so you can walk out with the naloxone you came for.