

FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

FRASER SALISH | JANUARY - DECEMBER 2024



Harm reduction efforts are helping to lower toxic drug poisoning events and deaths, but drug toxicity continues to disproportionately impact First Nations families and communities across BC.

The data presented here is specific to the Fraser Salish Region.

Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Of First Nations People

52

↓ 11.9%
Decrease from 2023

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE DIED FROM TOXIC DRUG POISONINGS IN 2024.

This is an 11.9% decrease from the 59 deaths in 2023.

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Involving First Nations People

6.4x

First Nations people experienced a death rate 6.4x higher than other residents of the region in 2024.

Deaths of First Nations People BY SEX

♂ 61.5%
Male

♀ 38.5%
Female

Deaths of First Nations People BY AGE

53.8%
40 Years and Older

46.2%
Younger than 40

First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths

1.5%

First Nations people make up 1.5% of the region's population.

8.5%

8.5% of toxic drug poisoning deaths in 2024 were First Nations people.



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

This data includes only Status First Nations people and their status-eligible descendants. Additionally, our data is limited to biological sex at birth, which may misidentify two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, intersex, and gender diverse people. Surveillance data is dynamic and subject to change with new information and historical corrections.

The FNHA gratefully acknowledges the health partners that make this data available: BC Centre for Disease Control, BC Coroners Service, BC Emergency Health Services, and the BC Ministry of Health.

You may find this information distressing. Cultural support is available at Tsow Tun Le Lum Society. Call 1-888-403-3123 (toll-free) or visit www.tsowtunlelum.org



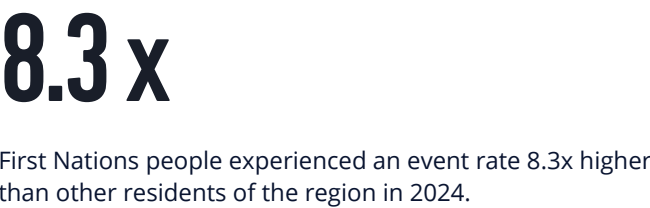
Toxic Drug Poisoning Events
Involving First Nations People



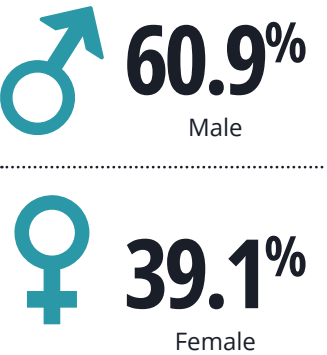
TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS EXPERIENCED
BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN 2024.

This is a 12.4% decrease from the 534 events experienced in 2023.

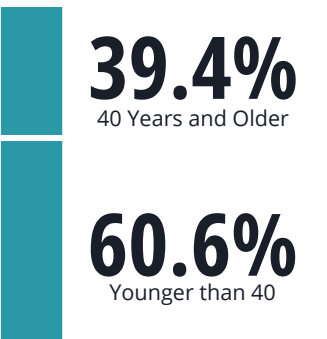
Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Events
Involving First Nations People



Events of
First Nations People
BY SEX



Events of
First Nations People
BY AGE



First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in
Toxic Drug Poisoning Events



NOTES

- Most toxic drug poisoning events are non-fatal and represent instances where paramedics were called and responded to a poisoning. Events that were treated successfully in community and events where 9-1-1 was not called are not captured in this data
- Event data is only collected for people with documented BC Personal Health Numbers (PHNs), and is therefore likely an underestimate, due to missing PHNs for some events

REGIONAL WELLNESS AND CULTURAL SUPPORTS

- Drug Alerts** - Text JOIN to ALERTS (253787)
- Harm Reduction Marketplace**
Online access to harm reduction supplies.
www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/mental-health-and-substance-use/harm-reduction
- KUU-US Crisis Service** - Call 1-800-KUU-US17 (588-8717) for an immediate response. 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

- FNHA Systems Support**
Systems.Support@fnha.ca
(604) 743-0635
- Regional FNHA staff**
Our team can help you navigate services including access to treatment, harm reduction, mental health and wellness counselling and/or traditional wellness.
- Regional Addictions Specialists**
Amber Stewart
Ian Tait

- Wellness Navigator - Substance Use and Decriminalization**
Helena Visona
- Mental Health Liaisons**
Misty Cockerill
Rosaline Madhavan
- Harm Reduction Educators**
Tracey Jirak
Mehrdrad Ghafouri
- Traditional Wellness**
Jody Jones
Elizabeth Julian
K'mai Johnson