

FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

INTERIOR | JANUARY – JUNE 2025



The unregulated drug supply in BC remains highly potent, unpredictable, and dangerous. First Nations individuals, families, and communities continue to be disproportionately affected by the toxic drug crisis. Harm reduction is saving lives by offering compassionate, accessible health services to people who use substances, wherever they are on their healing journey. A First Nations approach strengthens conventional harm reduction by weaving in culture, teachings, community, and connections to the land and one another.

The data presented here is specific to the Interior Region.

Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Of First Nations People

32

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE DIED FROM TOXIC DRUG POISONINGS BETWEEN JAN-JUNE 2025.

↑ 3.2%

This is a 3.2% increase from the 31 deaths during the same period in 2024.

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Involving First Nations People

4.6x

First Nations people experienced a death rate 4.6x higher than other residents of the region between Jan-June 2025.

First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths

4.5%

First Nations people make up 4.5% of the region's population.

18.0%

18.0% of toxic drug poisoning deaths between Jan-June 2025 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



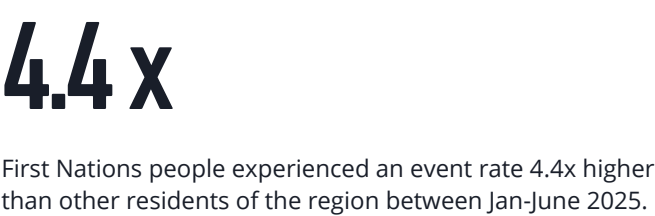
Toxic Drug Poisoning Events Involving First Nations People



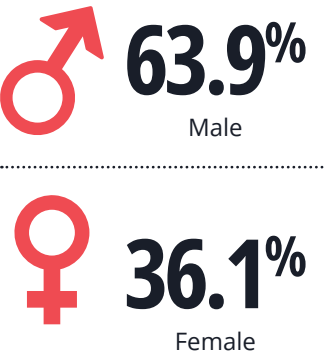
TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE BETWEEN JAN-JUNE 2025.

This is a 34.5% decrease from the 313 events experienced during the same period in 2024.

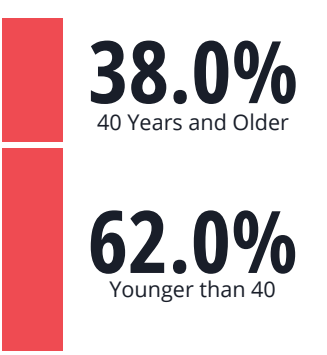
Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Events Involving First Nations People



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

Interior Region Community-Based Crisis Support – Call 1833-751-2525 (M-F 8am-4pm) or visit IRSupport@fnha.ca

Tsow Tun Le Lum Society – Call 1-888-403-3123 (toll-free) or visit www.tsowtunlelum.org

Indian Residential School Crisis Line is a national service for anyone experiencing pain or distress as a result of their residential school experience. Call toll-free 1-866-925-4419.

KUU-US Crisis Service – Call 1-800-KUU-US17 (588-8717) for an immediate response. 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

Hope for Wellness Help Line offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention by phone or online chat. Call toll-free 1-855-242-3310 or start a confidential chat with a counsellor at www.hopeforwellness.ca

Drug Alerts - Text JOIN to ALERTS (253787)

Regional contact email
IRSupports@fnha.ca

Regional FNHA staff
Manager, Interior Region Mental Health and Wellness
Debra Robbins

Regional Addictions Specialists
Angela Aspinall
Vanessa Buonanno

Regional Crisis Response Lead
Storme Sandy

Mental Health and Wellness Liaison
Destiny Dendewicz

Indigenous Harm Reduction Educator
Rocker Brady

Wellness Systems Navigators
Cathy Ballati
Jennifer du Bourg