

FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

NORTHERN | JANUARY - DECEMBER 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 Northern Region.

Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Of First Nations People

52

↓ 40.2%
Decrease from 2024

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE DIED FROM TOXIC DRUG POISONINGS IN 2025.

This is a 40.2% decrease from the 87 deaths in 2024.

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Involving First Nations People

2.8x

First Nations people experienced a death rate 2.8x higher than other residents of the region in 2025.

Deaths of First Nations People BY SEX

♂ 50.0%
Male

♀ 50.0%
Female

Deaths of First Nations People BY AGE

23.1%
40 Years and Older

76.9%
Younger than 40

First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths

14.8%

First Nations people make up 14.8% of the region's population.

36.1%

36.1% of toxic drug poisoning deaths in 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.

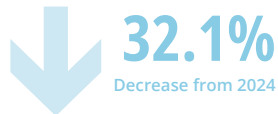
The FNHA gratefully acknowledges the health partners that make this data available: BC Centre for Disease Control, BC Coroners Service, BC Emergency Health Services, and the BC Ministry of Health.

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

471



TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN 2025.

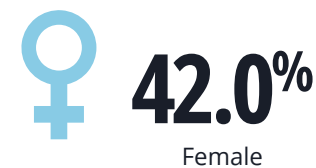
This is a 32.1% decrease from the 694 events experienced in 2024.

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Events Involving First Nations People

4.9x

First Nations people experienced an event rate 4.9x higher than other residents of the region in 2025.

Events of First Nations People BY SEX



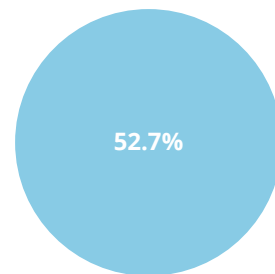
Events of First Nations People BY AGE



First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in Toxic Drug Poisoning Events



First Nations people make up 14.8% of the region's population.



52.7% of toxic drug poisoning events in 2025 were First Nations people.

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

Northern BC Crisis Line – Call 1-888-562-1214, 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Youth support text to 250-564-8336 (4-10 p.m. daily)

Drug Alerts –Text JOIN to ALERTS (253787)

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

310 Mental Health Support – Call 310-6789 (no area code needed) toll free anywhere in BC. Available 24 hours a day.

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 1-800-721-0066.

Hope for Wellness Help Line offers 24 hour 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

Fentanyl Test Strips – Fentanyl test strips are available at all OPS and SCS sites in BC and you can also use the them at home. The FNHA will reimburse costs for up to 100 fentanyl testing strips.

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

Regional contact email
MWResponse.North@fnha.ca