

FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

VANCOUVER COASTAL | 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 Vancouver Coastal Region.

Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Of First Nations People

44

↓ 42.9%
Decrease from the same period in 2024

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

This is a 42.9% decrease from the 77 deaths during the same period in 2024.

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Involving First Nations People

10.6x

First Nations people experienced a death rate 10.6x higher than other residents of the region between Jan-June 2025.

Deaths of First Nations People BY SEX

♂ 61.4%
Male

♀ 38.6%
Female

Deaths of First Nations People BY AGE

68.2%
40 Years and Older

31.8%
Younger than 40

First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths

2.1%

First Nations people make up 2.1% of the region's population.

18.5%

18.5% 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



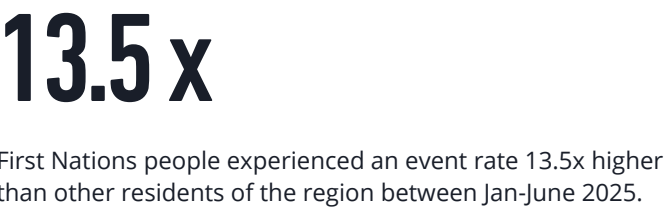
Toxic Drug Poisoning Events
Involving First Nations People



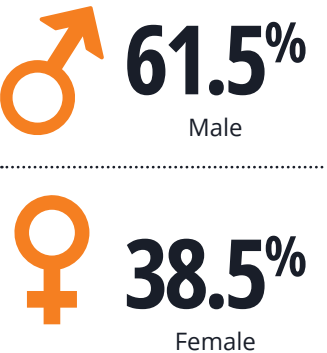
TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS EXPERIENCED
BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE BETWEEN JAN-JUNE 2025.

This is a 35.6% decrease from the 537 events experienced during the same period in 2024.

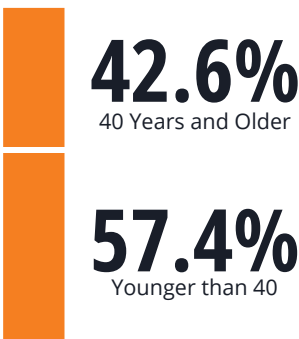
Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Events
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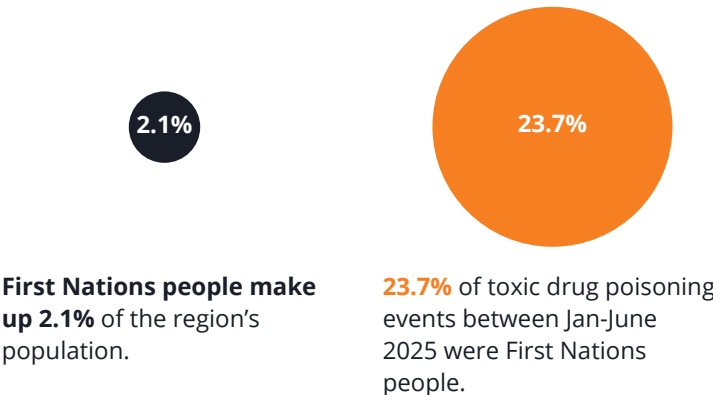
Events of
First Nations People
BY SEX



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

- Tsow Tun Le Lum Society** – Call 1-888-403-3123 (toll-free) or visit www.tsowtunlelum.org
- Indian Residential School Crisis Line** Call toll-free 1-866-925-4419.
- KUU-US Crisis Service** – Call 1-800-KUU-US17 (588-8717). 24-hours a day, seven days a week.
- Hope for Wellness Help Line** offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention. Call toll-free 1-855-242-3310 or start a confidential chat at www.hopeforwellness.ca
- Kids Help Phone**
1-800-668-6868 or text 686868
- KUU-US Youth Crisis Line**
250-723-2040
- Regional FNHA staff**
- Manager, Mental Health and Wellness**
Jen Smith
- Traditional Wellness Coordinator**
Eileen Joe
- Wellness Navigator, Decriminalization and Substance Use**
Dimicia Speck

- Indigenous Harm Reduction Educators**
Mackenzie Leslie
Keianna James
- Addictions Specialist**
Damian Clarke
Sean O'Donaghey
- Mental Health and Wellness Liaison**
Melanie Vivier
- Regional Community Coordinator, Child and Youth Care**
Terence Lewis