

FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2023



Harm reduction efforts are saving lives but drug toxicity continues at record high levels affecting First Nations families and communities across BC.

TOXIC DRUG POISONING DEATHS

Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths of First Nations People

448

↑ 10.3%
Increase over 2022

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE DIED FROM TOXIC DRUG POISONINGS IN 2023.

This is a 10.3% increase over the 406 deaths in 2022.

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Death

6.1 x First Nations people died at 6.1 times the rate of other BC residents in 2023. **This number was 5.9 in 2022.**

11.7 x First Nations women died at **11.7 times** the rate of other female BC residents in 2023.

4.8 x First Nations men died at **4.8 times** the rate of other male BC residents in 2023.

Deaths of First Nations People BY GENDER



277
Males **61.8%**



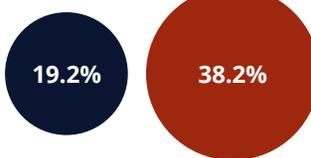
171
Females **38.2%**

Deaths of First Nations People BY AGE

45.8%
40 Years and Older

54.2%
Younger than 40

First Nations Women Experience Very High Rates of Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths



19.2% of other BC residents who died in 2023 were women.

38.2% of First Nations people who died in 2023 were women

First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths



First Nations people make up 3.4% of BC's population.

17.8% of toxic drug poisoning deaths in 2023 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. Data are collected as of February 2024, and are subject to change.

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

Toxic Drug Poisoning Events Involving First Nations People

3,446  **12.3%**
Increase over 2022

FIRST NATIONS EXPERIENCED TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS IN 2023

This is a 12.3% increase over the 3,068 events in 2022.

Events of First Nations People BY GENDER

 **61.2%**
Male

 **38.8%**
Female

Events of First Nations People BY AGE

35.5%
40 Years and Older

64.5%
Younger than 40

IN 2023 FNHA SUPPORTED



108

HARM REDUCTION GRANTS OF UP TO **\$50,000** DISTRIBUTED



359

PEOPLE WHO COMPLETED THE *NOT JUST NALOXONE* TRAINING COURSE



6,907

NASAL NALOXONE KITS DISTRIBUTED TO **97** FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES



2,194

VIRTUAL SESSIONS WITH PSYCHIATRISTS AND ADDICTIONS SPECIALISTS



1,375

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE ACCESSED OPIOID AGONIST THERAPY