

# FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

FRASER SALISH | JANUARY - JUNE 2024



Harm reduction efforts are saving lives but drug toxicity continues at record high levels affecting 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

30

↓ 3.2%  
Decrease from the same period in 2023

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE DIED FROM TOXIC DRUG POISONINGS BETWEEN JAN-JUNE 2024.

This is a 3.2% decrease from the 31 deaths during the same period in 2023.

## Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Death

7.6x

First Nations people experienced a death rate 7.6x higher than other residents of the region between Jan-June 2024.

## Deaths of First Nations People BY SEX

♂ 63.3%  
Male

♀ 36.7%  
Female

## Deaths of First Nations People BY AGE

60.0%  
40 Years and Older

40.0%  
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.

9.6%

9.6% of toxic drug poisoning deaths between Jan-June 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](http://www.tsowtunlelum.org)

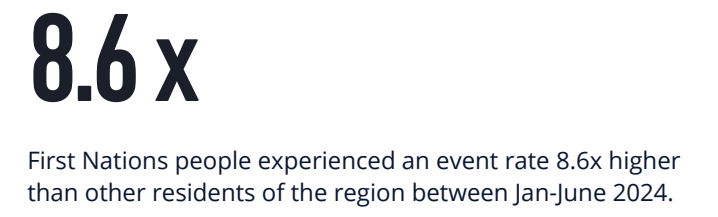


**Toxic Drug Poisoning Events involving First Nations People**

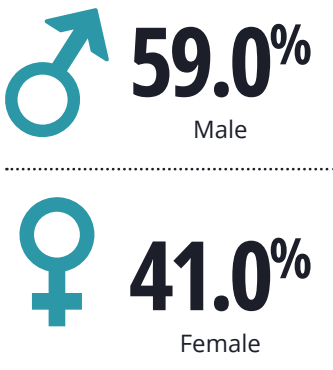


**TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE BETWEEN JAN-JUNE 2024.**  
This is a decrease of 16.4% from 292 events experienced during the same period in 2023.

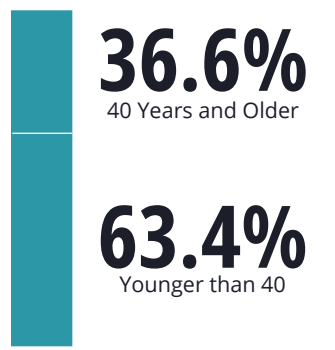
**Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Events involving First Nations People**



**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](http://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 Specialist**  
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