

FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

FRASER SALISH | 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.

The data presented here is specific to the Fraser Salish Region.

Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths Of First Nations People

58

↑ 16.0%
Increase over 2022

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE DIED FROM TOXIC DRUG POISONINGS IN 2023.

This is a 16% increase from the 50 deaths in 2022.

Deaths of First Nations People BY GENDER

♂ 74.1%
Male

♀ 25.9%
Female

Deaths of First Nations People BY AGE

46.6%
40 Years and Older

53.4%
Younger than 40

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Death

6.3x

First Nations people experienced a death rate 6.3x higher than other residents of the region.

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.

8.4%

8.4% 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 involving First Nations People

498

↓ 12.6%
Decrease from 2022

TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN 2023

This is a decrease of 12.6% from 570 events experienced in 2022.

8.6x First Nations people experienced an event rate 8.6x higher than other residents of the region.

Events of First Nations People BY GENDER

♂ 69.4%
Male

♀ 30.6%
Female

Events of First Nations People BY AGE

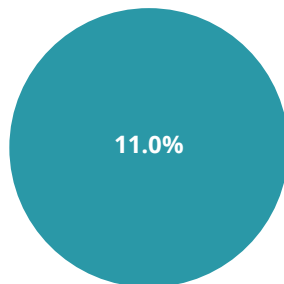
34.5%
40 Years and Older

65.5%
Younger than 40

First Nations People are Disproportionately Represented in Toxic Drug Poisoning events



First Nations people make up 1.5% of the region's population.



11.0% of toxic drug poisoning events in 2023 were First Nations people.

NOTES

- Most toxic drug poisoning events are non-fatal and represent when 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

Navigation of services includes access to treatment, harm reduction, mental health and wellness counselling and/or traditional wellness.

Systems Support
Systems.Support@fnha.ca
(604) 743-0635

Regional Addictions Specialist
Amber Stewart

Wellness Navigator - Substance Use and Decriminalization
Helena Visona

Mental Health Liaisons
Misty Cockerill
Rosaline Madhavan

Harm Reduction Educators
Tracey Jirak
Mehrdad Ghafouri

Emotional and Cultural Support

Traditional Wellness

Jody Jones
Elizabeth Julian
K'mai Johnson

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

Further Harm Reduction Support

Drug Alerts - Text JOIN to ALERTS (253787)

Harm Reduction Marketplace
Online access to harm reduction supplies.