

FIRST NATIONS AND THE TOXIC DRUG POISONING CRISIS IN BC

VANCOUVER COASTAL | JANUARY - DECEMBER 2024



Harm reduction efforts are helping to lower toxic drug poisoning events and deaths, but drug toxicity continues to disproportionately impact First Nations families and communities across BC.

The data presented here is specific to the Vancouver Coastal Region.

Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths
Of First Nations People

135

↓ 13.5%
Decrease from 2023

FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE DIED FROM TOXIC DRUG POISONINGS IN 2024.

This is a 13.5% decrease from the 156 deaths in 2023.

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Deaths
Involving First Nations People

13.7x

First Nations people experienced a death rate 13.7x higher than other residents of the region in 2024.

Deaths of
First Nations People
BY SEX

♂ 63.7%
Male

♀ 36.3%
Female

Deaths of
First Nations People
BY AGE

62.2%
40 Years and Older

37.8%
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.

22.5%

22.5% of toxic drug poisoning deaths in 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.

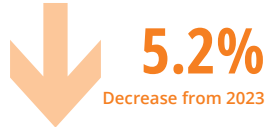
The FNHA gratefully acknowledges the health partners that make this data available: BC Centre for Disease Control, BC Coroners Service, BC Emergency Health Services, and the BC Ministry of Health.

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



Toxic Drug Poisoning Events Involving First Nations People

970



TOXIC DRUG POISONING EVENTS EXPERIENCED BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE IN 2024.

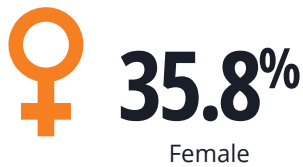
This is a 5.2% decrease from the 1,023 events experienced in 2023.

Rate of Toxic Drug Poisoning Events Involving First Nations People

14.9 x

First Nations people experienced an event rate 14.9x higher than other residents of the region in 2024.

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

2.1%

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

22.9%

22.9% of toxic drug poisoning events in 2024 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

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

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