

# TARRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DATA BRIEF



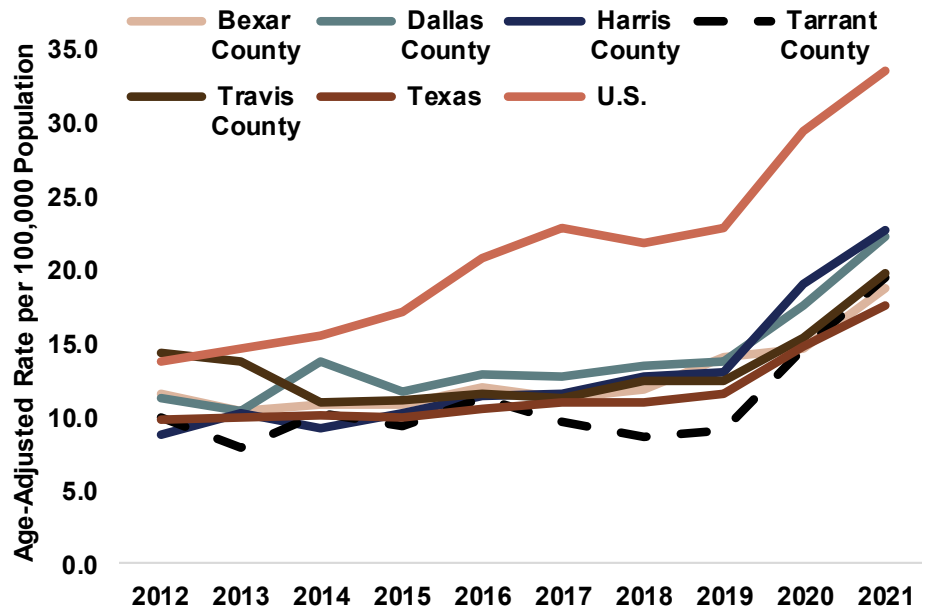
## OVERDOSES IN TARRANT COUNTY

**Overdose:** a type of poisoning [see Data Brief] that occurs when the body is overwhelmed by toxic levels of over-the-counter (OTC), prescription, or illegal drugs. Overdoses can be fatal and non-fatal depending on how fast they are recognized and treated. In addition, they can be unintentional and intentional.

An overdose can occur for many reasons: unknowingly consuming a drug; taking the wrong amount of a drug; taking multiple drugs or combining drugs and substances that cause side effects; using drugs for non-medical purposes or to self-harm; taking the wrong drug or someone else's drug.

Sometimes drugs are illegally manufactured with other drugs/substances (fentanyl or xylazine) and consumers are unaware. These drugs often lead to an unintentional overdose and death, due to these hidden ingredients.

Figure 1. Overdose mortality rates by geographic location, 2012-2021



Overdose mortality rates are derived from the drug-induced underlying cause of death codes (X40-X44, X60-X64, X85, and Y10-Y14) in CDC WONDER

**All locations had a significant increase in overdose mortality rates from 2012 to 2021**

**The U.S., Texas, and Dallas, Harris, and Tarrant Counties had significant increases each year from 2019 to 2021**

Figure 2. Top 3 drug types\* among overdose deaths by geographic location, 2021

Rank	U.S. N (%)	Texas N (%)	Bexar County N (%)	Dallas County N (%)	Harris County N (%)	Tarrant County N (%)	Travis County N (%)
1	Synthetic Narcotics 70,603 (64%)	Psychostimulants 1,937 (37%)	Unspecified Drugs 342 (89%)	Psychostimulants 225 (38%)	Synthetic Narcotics 460 (42%)	Synthetic Narcotics 157 (37%)	Synthetic Narcotics 119 (43%)
2	Unspecified Drugs 41,405 (37%)	Synthetic Narcotics 1,858 (36%)	Psychostimulants 201 (52%)	Cocaine 192 (32%)	Cocaine 401 (37%)	Psychostimulants 145 (35%)	Psychostimulants 108 (39%)
3	Psychostimulants 32,540 (29%)	Unspecified Drugs 1,671 (32%)	Synthetic Narcotics 108 (28%)	Synthetic Narcotics 189 (32%)	Psychostimulants 370 (34%)	Cocaine 84 (20%)	Cocaine 79 (29%)

\* Drug types are identified by specific multiple cause of death codes (T codes). Deaths involving multiple drugs are counted in each drug type category; N = number of times that drug type was included in overdose deaths for that location; % = N / total number of overdose deaths for that location; Synthetic Narcotics (T40.4) = other synthetic opioids other than methadone (fentanyl, tramadol, buprenorphine, etc.); Cocaine (T40.5); Psychostimulants (T43.6) = those with abuse potential (methamphetamine, MDMA or ecstasy, ADHD medications, etc.); Unspecified Drugs (T50.9) = other and unspecified drugs, medicaments, and biological substances

**In 2021, there were 420 fatal overdoses among Tarrant County residents and 89% were unintentional (accidents)**

**In 2021, Tarrant County had a significantly lower overdose mortality rate than the U.S. and Harris County**

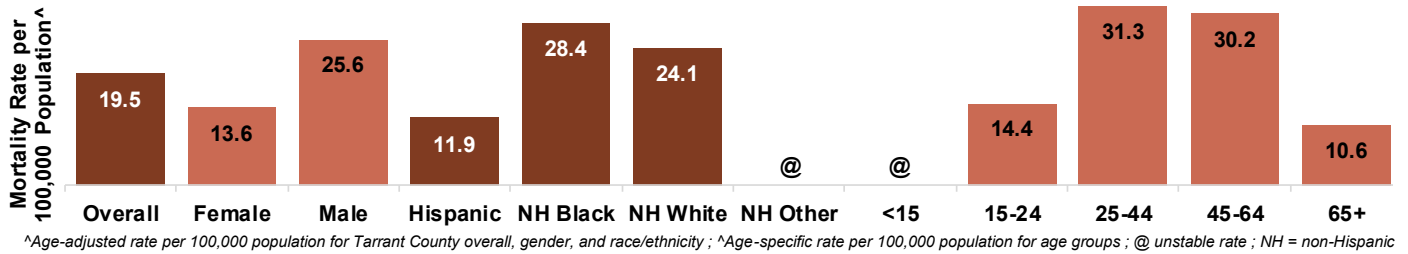


**Among Tarrant County residents, 143 fentanyl-related deaths<sup>†</sup> occurred in 2021<sup>‡</sup>**

**That was more than the previous five years combined (134 deaths from 2016-2020)**

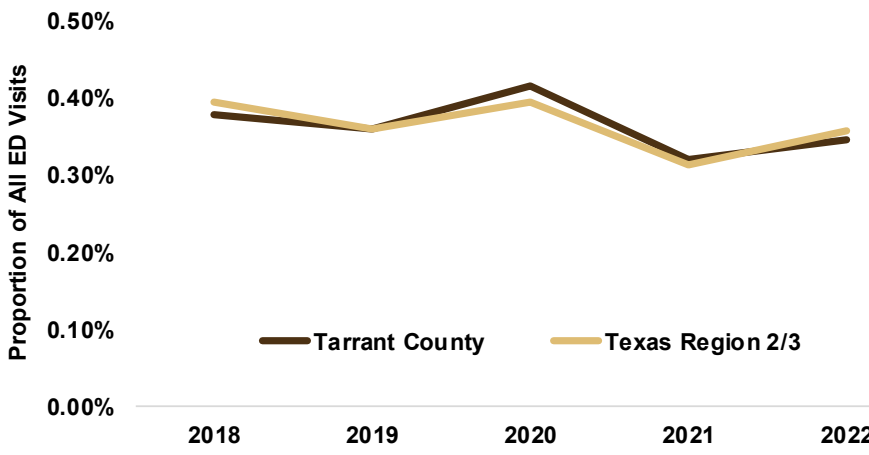
<sup>†</sup> 'Fentanyl' is listed in the literal cause of death fields on the death record; <sup>‡</sup> 2021 fentanyl data are provisional and subject to change; All significant differences detected at the 95% confidence level  
Data sources: American Addiction Centers, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Texas Department of State Health Services; Data Brief provided by: Office of Health Informatics

Figure 3. Tarrant County overdose mortality rates<sup>^</sup> by gender, race/ethnicity, and age group (in years), 2021



Among Tarrant County residents, overdose mortality rates were **significantly higher among males, non-Hispanic blacks and whites, and individuals aged 25-44 and 45-64 years**

Figure 4. Overdose-related emergency department (ED) visits<sup>¶</sup>, Tarrant County and Texas Region 2/3<sup>^^</sup>, 2018-2022



From 2018-2022, there were **over 17,000 overdose-related ED visits among Tarrant County residents**

These overdose-related ED visits were most often coded as **unintentional (accidents) and involving unspecified drug types**

Among these visits, patients were most frequently aged **25-44 years and female**

<sup>¶</sup> Overdose-related ED visits determined with the 'CDC All Drug v2' Syndromic Surveillance definition in ESSENCE (click here for definition); <sup>^^</sup>Texas Region 2/3 = Texas Department of State Health Services public health region consisting of 49 counties in North Texas (click here for exact coverage)

**Be prepared to save a life!**  
If you witness a suspected overdose, you can **administer Naloxone (Narcan)**. While it only reverses opioid overdoses, it will not harm the person overdosing

Seek medical care **immediately** if you or someone else is experiencing these symptoms



**While overdose symptoms may vary depending on the drug(s) involved, common symptoms include:**

- Abnormal body temperature (hyperthermia or hypothermia)
- Abnormal or difficulty breathing
- Anxiety
- Delirium
- Extreme agitation
- Fast, slowed, or irregular pulse
- Seizures
- Severe chest pain
- Severe headaches
- Skin color changes (pale/blue for respiratory depressants and red/flushed for stimulants)
- Unresponsive loss of consciousness
- Vomiting

**Education and Prevention**

- Carry Naloxone to reverse opioid overdoses. [[narcan.com](http://narcan.com)] [[cdc.gov/stopoverdose/naloxone/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/stopoverdose/naloxone/index.html)]
- Only buy drugs from official medical providers! Avoid using drugs of any type for recreational or non-medical purposes.
- Follow the instructions on drug packaging and talk with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.
- Keep drugs locked up (lockbox, safe, locking cabinet) and stored out of sight and out of reach. [[upandaway.org](http://upandaway.org)]
- Properly dispose of expired, unused, and unwanted drugs at official take back locations. Do not share them with others! Check the FDA's flush list: [[fda.gov/media/85219/download](https://www.fda.gov/media/85219/download)]
- People struggling with distress are at greater risk for drug use so it is important to seek emotional support if needed. Healthy lifestyle behaviors (physical activity, proper nutrition, and meditation) can reduce stress and improve mental health.

**Resources and Services**

Request FREE Naloxone in Texas [[naloxonetexas.com](http://naloxonetexas.com)]

Community overdose reporting [[txcope.org](http://txcope.org)]

Local drug take back locations [[meddropbox.org](http://meddropbox.org)]

DEA Prescription Drug Take Back Days [[dea.gov/takebackday](https://www.dea.gov/takebackday)]

Poison Control Hotline Call 1-800-222-1222 [[poisoncontrol.org](http://poisoncontrol.org)]

Challenge of Tarrant County [[challengetc.org](http://challengetc.org)]

MHMR Tarrant County Call 1-800-866-2465 [[mhmtarrant.org](http://mhmtarrant.org)]

Recovery Resource Council Call 817-332-6329 [[recoverycouncil.org/programs-services/](http://recoverycouncil.org/programs-services/)]

Texas Health and Human Services [[txopioidresponse.org](http://txopioidresponse.org)] [[onepillkillstx.com](http://onepillkillstx.com)] [[nhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use/](https://www.nhs.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use/)]

National Substance Abuse Helpline Call 1-800-662-4357

All significant differences detected at the 95% confidence level; Data sources: American Addiction Centers, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Syndromic Surveillance data from 100+ North Texas hospitals via the Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community based Epidemics (ESSENCE) Data Brief provided by: Office of Health Informatics