

TARRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DATA BRIEF



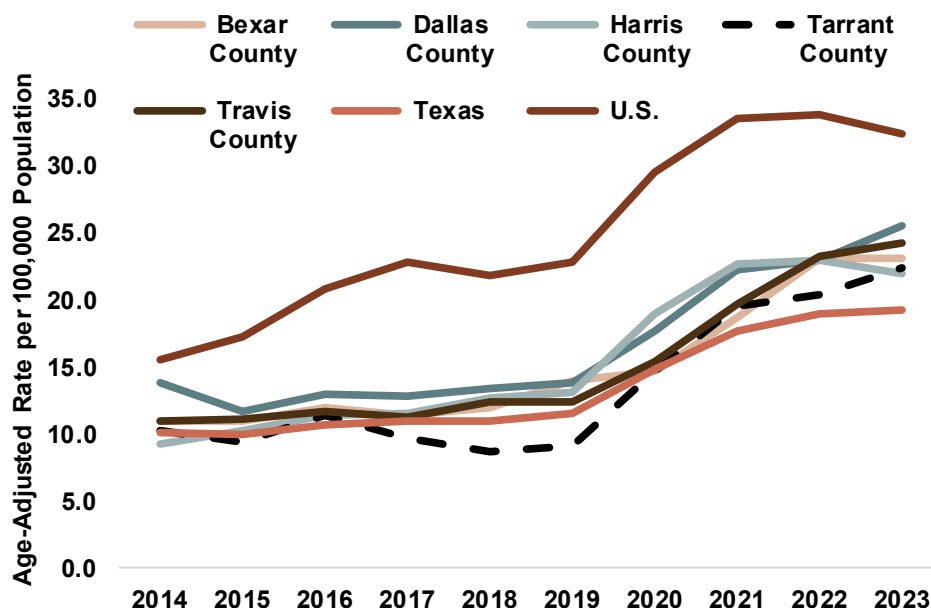
OVERDOSES IN TARRANT COUNTY

Overdose is a type of poisoning [see Data Brief] that occurs when the body is overwhelmed by toxic levels of drugs (over-the-counter, prescription, or illegal). Depending on how quickly an overdose is recognized and treated, it can be fatal or non-fatal. Individuals who experience an overdose alone are more likely to die. Overdoses can be unintentional or intentional.

How overdoses can happen:

- Unknowingly consuming a drug
- Incorrect amount or dosage
- Taking the wrong drug
- Taking a drug prescribed for someone else
- Using drugs for non-medical or self-harm purposes
- Side effects from taking several drugs and/or combining drugs and other substances (alcohol)
- Illegally manufactured drugs that contain illegally made fentanyl (powerful synthetic opioid)

Figure 1. Overdose mortality rates by geographic location, 2014-2023

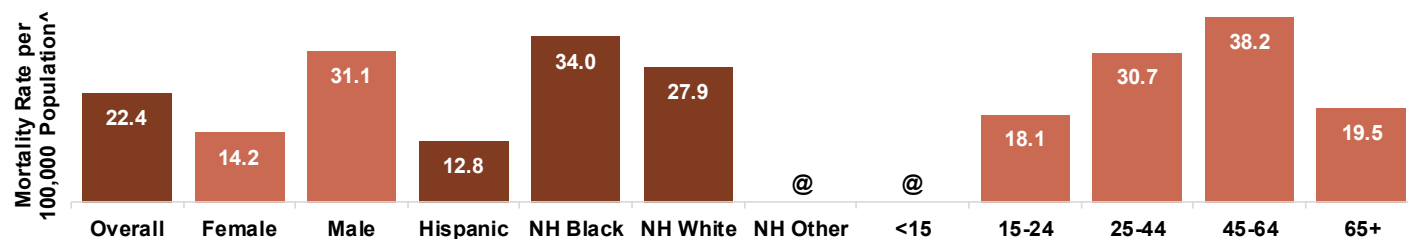


Each geographic location had a **significant increase** in overdose mortality from 2019 to 2023

In 2023, Tarrant County had a **significantly lower** overdose mortality rate than the U.S.

There were **503 fatal overdoses** among Tarrant County residents in 2023 and **90% were unintentional**

Figure 2. Tarrant County overdose mortality rates by gender, race/ethnicity, and age group (in years), 2023



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**

Among Tarrant County residents, 185 fentanyl-related overdose deaths[†] occurred in 2023[‡]
That was more than 2016-2020 combined (134 deaths) and a 5% increase from 2022

Figure 3. Top 3 drug types* among overdose deaths by geographic location, 2023

| Rank | U.S. N (%) | Texas N (%) | Bexar County N (%) | Dallas County N (%) | Harris County N (%) | Tarrant County N (%) | Travis County N (%) |
|------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Synthetic Narcotics 72,776 (67%) | Synthetic Narcotics 2,613 (44%) | Unspecified Drugs 410 (84%) | Synthetic Narcotics 306 (45%) | Synthetic Narcotics 550 (51%) | Synthetic Narcotics / Psychostimulants 196 (39%) | Synthetic Narcotics 210 (58%) |
| 2 | Unspecified Drugs 39,167 (36%) | Psychostimulants 2,348 (40%) | Psychostimulants 270 (55%) | Cocaine 251 (37%) | Cocaine 435 (40%) | | Psychostimulants 182 (51%) |
| 3 | Psychostimulants 34,856 (32%) | Unspecified Drugs 1,723 (29%) | Synthetic Narcotics 173 (36%) | Psychostimulants 233 (34%) | Psychostimulants 369 (34%) | | Cocaine 123 (34%) |

* 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 (fentanyl, tramadol, buprenorphine, etc.) other than methadone ; **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 2023, synthetic narcotics and psychostimulants tied as the top drug type among Tarrant County overdose deaths with each found in 196 deaths; 39% of overdose deaths had synthetic narcotics documented and 39% of overdose deaths had psychostimulants documented

Figure 4. Tarrant County overdose deaths by month, 2021-2023

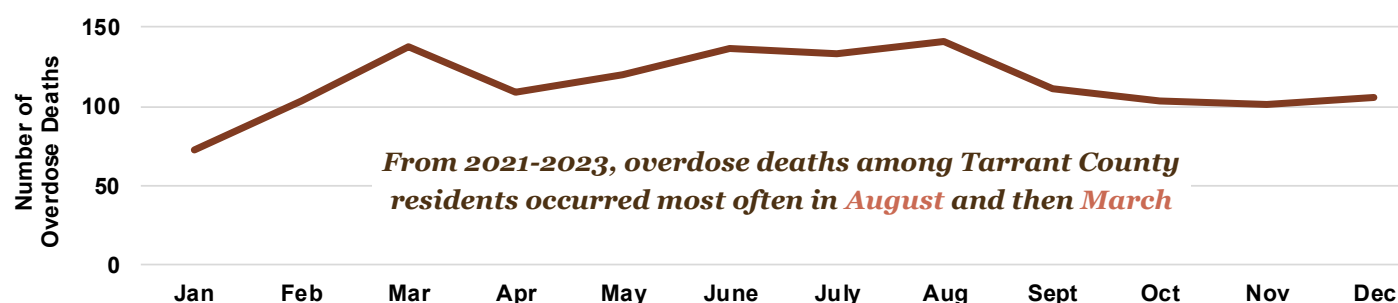
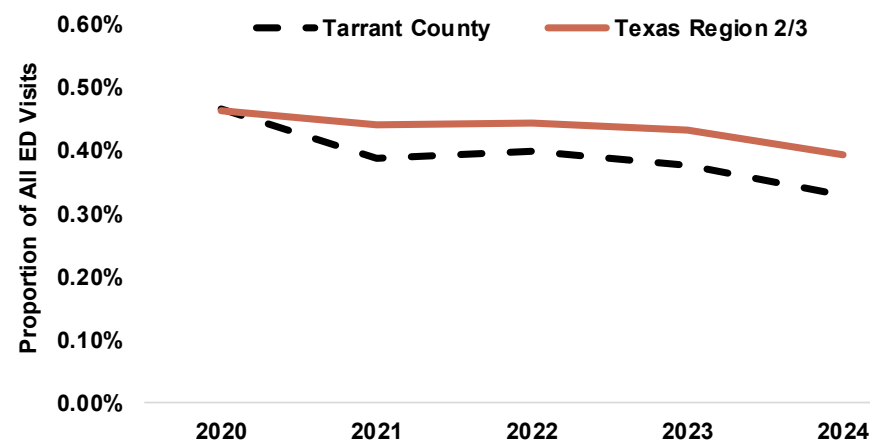


Figure 5. Overdose-related emergency department (ED) visits**, Tarrant County and Texas Region 2/3^^, 2020-2024



From 2020-2024, there were over 18,700 overdose-related ED visits among Tarrant County residents

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

** Overdose-related ED visits determined with the 'CDC All Drug Overdose v3 Parsed' Syndromic Surveillance definition in ESSENCE ([click here for definition](#)). This definition was designed to be used to identify ED visits for suspected non-fatal drug overdoses of unintentional or undetermined intent ; ^^ 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](#))

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

- Abnormal body temperature (hyperthermia or hypothermia)
- Abnormal or difficulty breathing (choking, gurgling, or snoring sounds while unconscious)
- Anxiety
- Delirium
- Extreme agitation
- Fast, slowed, or irregular pulse
- “Pinpoint” or small pupils
- Seizures
- Severe chest pain
- Severe headaches
- Skin color changes (pale/blue for respiratory depressants and red/flushed for stimulants)
- Unresponsive loss of consciousness
- Vomiting

Recognizing overdose symptoms can save a life!



If someone is experiencing an overdose:

- **Call 911 immediately**
- **Administer *Naloxone* if it is available**
- **Keep the person breathing and awake**
- **Lay them on their side to prevent choking**
- **Stay with them until help arrives**



Education and Prevention

- **Carry Naloxone (Narcan)** to reverse overdoses from opioids [[cdc.gov/stop-overdose/caring/naloxone.html](https://www.cdc.gov/stop-overdose/caring/naloxone.html)]
- **Only buy drugs from official medical providers** and avoid using drugs for recreational or non-medical purposes [[dea.gov/onepill](https://www.dea.gov/onepill)] [[dea.gov/resources/pill-press-resources](https://www.dea.gov/resources/pill-press-resources)] [[dea.gov/resources/illegal-online-pharmacies](https://www.dea.gov/resources/illegal-online-pharmacies)]
- **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](https://www.upandaway.org)]
- **Properly dispose** of expired, unused, and unwanted drugs at official take back locations/events. [[meddropsbox.org](https://www.meddropsbox.org)] **Do not share them with others!** [[fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/safe-disposal-medicines/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know)]
- People struggling with distress are at greater risk for using drugs, so it is important to **seek emotional support** if needed **Call/Text 988** [[988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)]
- **Healthy lifestyle behaviors** such as physical activity, proper nutrition, adequate sleep, reducing screen time, and connecting with community-based and faith-based organizations can reduce stress and improve mental health

Resources and Support

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

Drug Take Back Locations & Drop Boxes [[meddropsbox.org](https://www.meddropsbox.org)]

DEA Drug Take Back Events & Red Ribbon Week [[dea.gov/takebackday](https://www.dea.gov/takebackday)] [[dea.gov/redribbon](https://www.dea.gov/redribbon)]

Texas Poison Center Network **Call 1-800-222-1222** [[poisoncontrol.org](https://www.poisoncontrol.org)] [[webpoisoncontrol.org](https://www.webpoisoncontrol.org)]

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

MHMR of Tarrant County **Call 1-800-866-2465** [[mhmrtarrant.org/addiction-services/](https://www.mhmrtarrant.org/addiction-services/)]

Recovery Resource Council **Call 817-332-6329** [[recoverycouncil.org/programs-and-services/](https://www.recoverycouncil.org/programs-and-services/)]

Texas Health and Human Services [[txopioidresponse.org](https://www.txopioidresponse.org)] [[onepillkillstx.com](https://www.onepillkillstx.com)] [[hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use](https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use)] [[healthdata.dshs.texas.gov/dashboard/drugs-and-alcohol/all-drugs/naloxone-distribution-interactive-map](https://www.healthdata.dshs.texas.gov/dashboard/drugs-and-alcohol/all-drugs/naloxone-distribution-interactive-map)]

SAMHSA's National Helpline **Call 1-800-662-4357** [[findtreatment.gov](https://www.findtreatment.gov)]