

# UNINTENTIONAL DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS IN CONNECTICUT A FACT SHEET – 2023 UPDATE

INJURY AND VIOLENCE SURVEILLANCE UNIT • Updated January 2025

## What we know about unintentional drug overdose deaths in Connecticut:

Unintentional drug overdose deaths are one of the leading causes of injury related deaths. The use of illegal opioids were the main cause for drug overdose related deaths. There was 8.5% decrease in drug overdose deaths in 2023, compared to 2022.

As seen in previous years, in 2023 approximately 92% of drug overdose deaths were caused by an opioid (including illicit and prescription opioids).

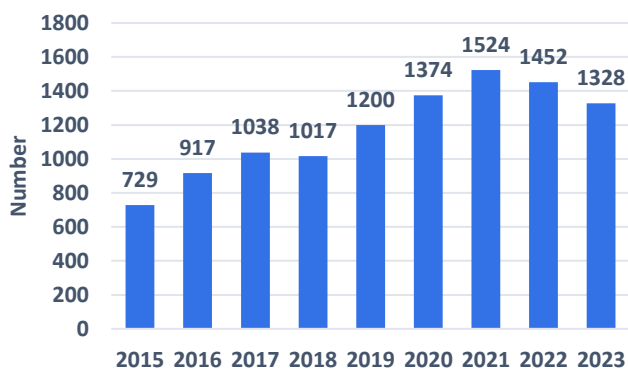
Approximately 85% of unintentional drug overdose deaths were involved with fentanyl. Xylazine, an animal tranquilizer, in combination with fentanyl continued to be a concern and was involved in 22% of the drug overdose deaths (N=286).

**Emerging substances:** In 2023, *carfentanil*, a dangerous analog of fentanyl, also known as an elephant tranquilizer, was involved in 7 deaths, *nitazene*, a family of novel synthetic opioids, in 10 deaths, and *designer benzodiazepines* in 31 deaths.

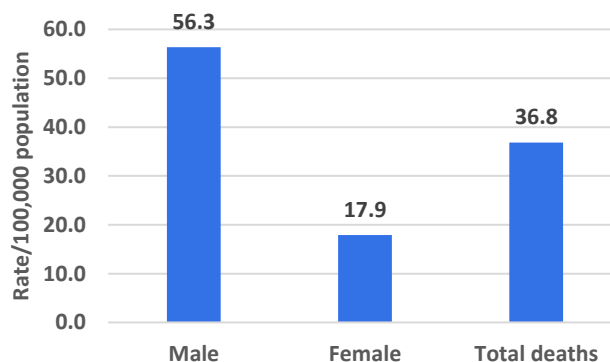
## Key Points

- There were 1,328 unintentional drug overdose deaths in Connecticut in 2023 representing a decrease of 124 deaths (-8.5%) compared to 2022 (1,452).
- Most of the decedents (69.7%) overdosed at a residence (either their own or someone else's).
- Males (56.3 per 100,000 population) had higher mortality rates when compared to females (17.9 per 100,000 population) in 2023.
- Non-Hispanic black population had highest mortality rate (67.9) followed by Hispanic (all races included) population (38.0).
- Highest mortality rates were seen between 35-64 years age group.
- There was a decline in death rates across all age groups in 2023 except for the >65-year age group where there was a rise in rates from 11.4 in 2021 to 18.5 in 2023.
- In 2023, 55% of the deaths were involved with cocaine with an increase of 8% compared to 2022.

**Number of Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths, Connecticut, 2023**



**Rate of Drug Overdose Deaths, by Sex, Connecticut, 2023**

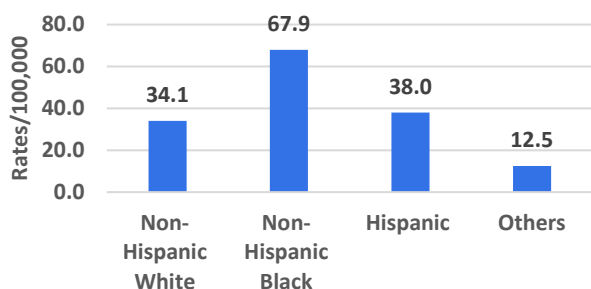


Data Source: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), Connecticut and State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS)

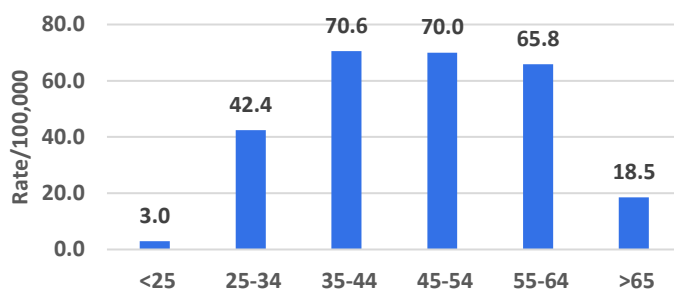
# UNINTENTIONAL DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS IN CONNECTICUT A FACT SHEET – 2023 UPDATE

INJURY AND VIOLENCE SURVEILLANCE UNIT • AUGUST 2024

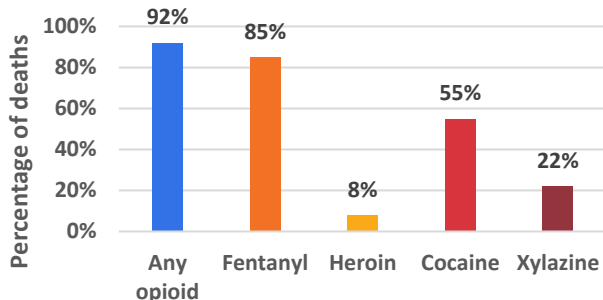
**Rate of Drug Overdose Deaths, by Race and Ethnicity, Connecticut, 2023**



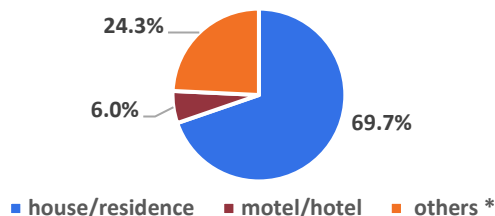
**Rate of Drug Overdose Deaths, by Age, Connecticut, 2023**



**Percentage of Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths by Drug Type, Connecticut, 2023**



**Percentage of Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths by Injury Place, Connecticut, 2023**



\* Other places included alley, street ways, parking garage, outdoors etc.

Data Source: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME), Connecticut and State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS)

## How to prevent drug overdose deaths:

- Create awareness in communities by providing education on the dangerous consequences of using illicit opioids.
- Promote harm reduction choices and reduce stigma about substance use disorder problem.
- Learn about naloxone, the lifesaving drug that reverses opioid overdoses. Visit: [www.norasaves.com](http://www.norasaves.com)
- Share options for safe disposal of unused medications and the site of local drug collection boxes.
- Maximize use of prescription monitoring programs where physicians register and monitor the prescriptions they write for patients.
- Enhance and promote Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) programs.

For further information visit: [www.drugfreect.org](http://www.drugfreect.org); [www.ct.gov/dph/injuryprevention](http://www.ct.gov/dph/injuryprevention)