

TARRANT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DATA BRIEF



OVERDOSE DEATHS IN TARRANT COUNTY

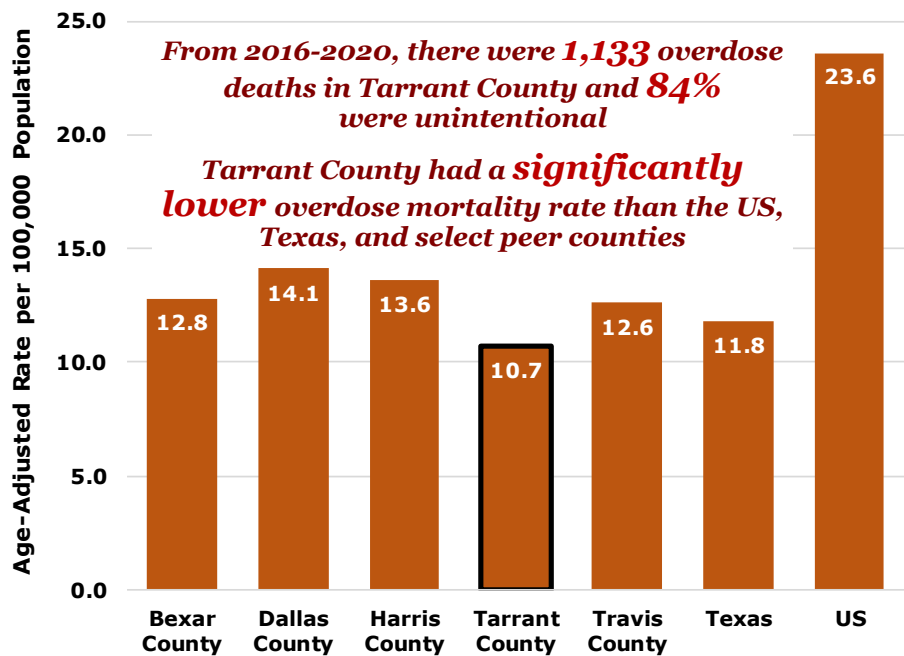
Overdose

A type of poisoning that occurs when the body is overwhelmed by toxic levels of over-the-counter, prescription, or illegal drugs. Depending on how fast an overdose is recognized and treated, it can cause injuries and death. Overdoses can be intentional or unintentional.

An overdose can occur for many reasons, such as unknowingly consuming a drug, combining drugs and substances that cause side effects or taking multiple drugs, using drugs for nonmedical purposes or to self-harm, taking the wrong drug or someone else's drug, and using incorrect doses of a drug.

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

Figure 1. Overdose mortality rates by geographical location, 2016-2020



From 2016-2020, there were **1,133** overdose deaths in Tarrant County and **84%** were unintentional

Tarrant County had a **significantly lower** overdose mortality rate than the US, Texas, and select peer counties

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. Drug categories are identified by specific multiple cause of death codes (T codes). Deaths involving multiple drugs are counted in each drug category.

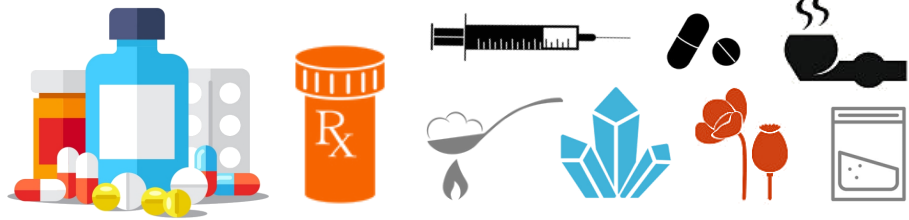
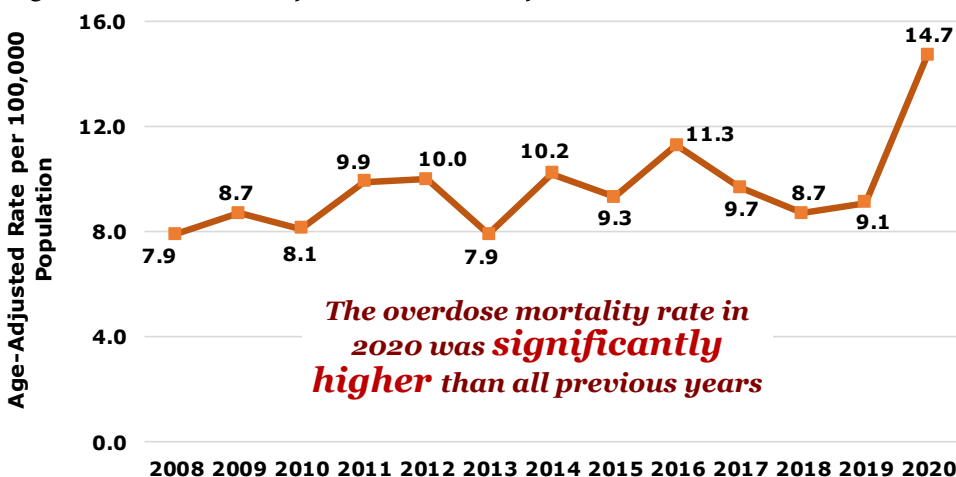


Figure 2. Tarrant County overdose mortality rates, 2008-2020



The overdose mortality rate in 2020 was **significantly higher** than all previous years

Among Tarrant County overdose deaths from 2016-2020, **23%** involved **psychostimulants** with abuse potential (methamphetamine, MDMA 'ecstasy,' and ADHD medications), **21%** involved **heroin**, and **21%** involved **cocaine**

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

Figure 3. Overdose mortality rates by race/ethnicity and gender, Tarrant County, 2016-2020

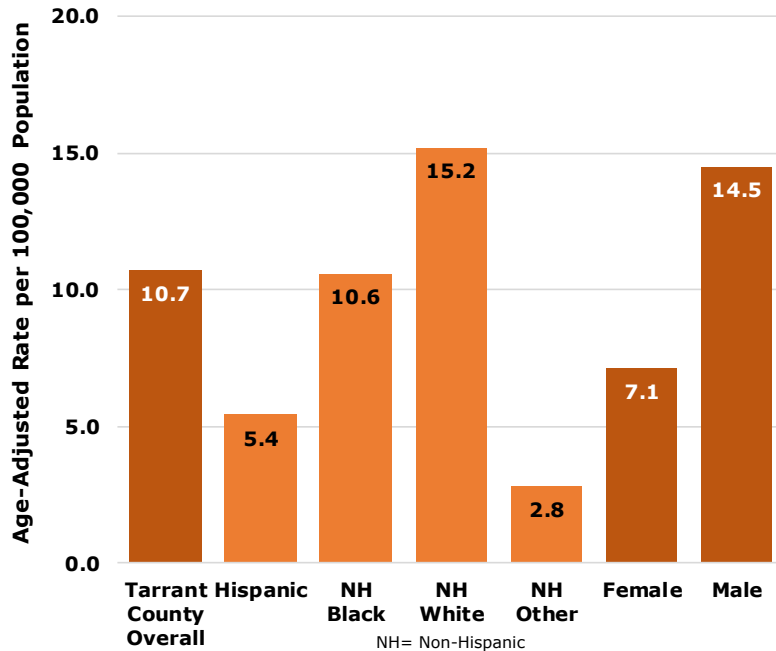
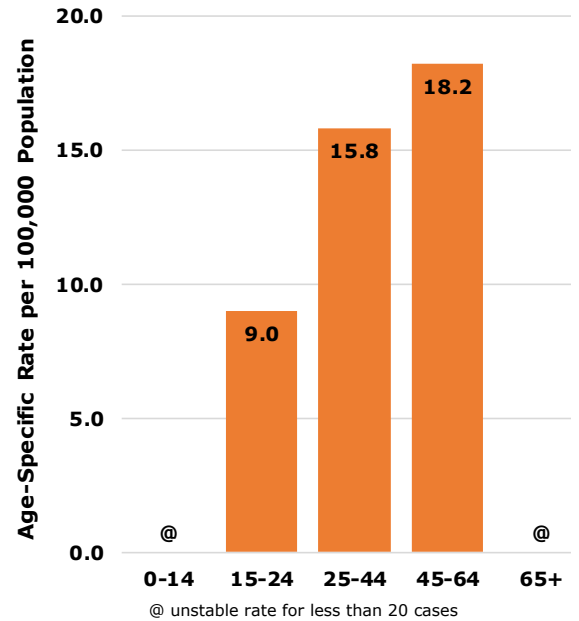


Figure 4. Overdose mortality rates by age group, Tarrant County, 2016-2020



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 or blue for respiratory depressants and red or flushed for stimulants)
- Unresponsive loss of consciousness



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

Be prepared to save a life!

If you witness a suspected overdose, you can administer Narcan. While Narcan only reverses opioid overdoses, it will not harm the person overdosing

Education and Prevention

- Follow the instructions on drug packaging and talk to 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]
- Properly dispose of expired, unused, and unwanted drugs at official take back locations or events. Do not flush or throw them away. [meddropbox.org]
- Avoid temptations and peer pressure to use prescribed or illicit drugs for recreational purposes.
- People struggling with distress are at greater risk for drug use so it is important to seek emotional support if needed.
- Healthy lifestyle behaviors (exercise, proper nutrition, and meditation) can reduce stress and improve mental health.
- Carry Narcan to reverse opioid overdoses [narcan.com]

Resources and Services

- Request FREE Narcan in Texas [morenarcanplease.com]
- Local drug take back locations [meddropbox.org]
- DEA National Prescription Drug Take Back Days [takebackday.dea.gov]
- Poison Control Hotline Call 1-800-222-1222 [poisoncontrol.org] [webpoisoncontrol.org] Online Tool
- MHMR Tarrant County Call 817-335-3022 [mhmrct.org]
- Recovery Resource Council Call 817-332-6329 [recoverycouncil.org]
- Texas Health and Human Services [hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use]
- National Substance Abuse Hotline 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, Dose of Reality, Recovery Connection
 Data Brief provided by: Division of Epidemiology and Health Information