

2020-2021 Poisoning, Overdose, and Acute Intoxication Fatalities of Children Ages 0-18

2,368

U.S. children ages 0 through 18 died as a result of poisoning, overdose, and acute intoxication.

39

Michigan children ages 0 through 18 died as a result of poisoning, overdose, and acute intoxication.

20

The circumstances leading to 20 fatalities due to poisoning, overdose, and acute intoxication were reviewed by local CDR teams.

Deaths were included in this data brief if manner of death was determined to be accident, undetermined/indeterminate, or homicide.

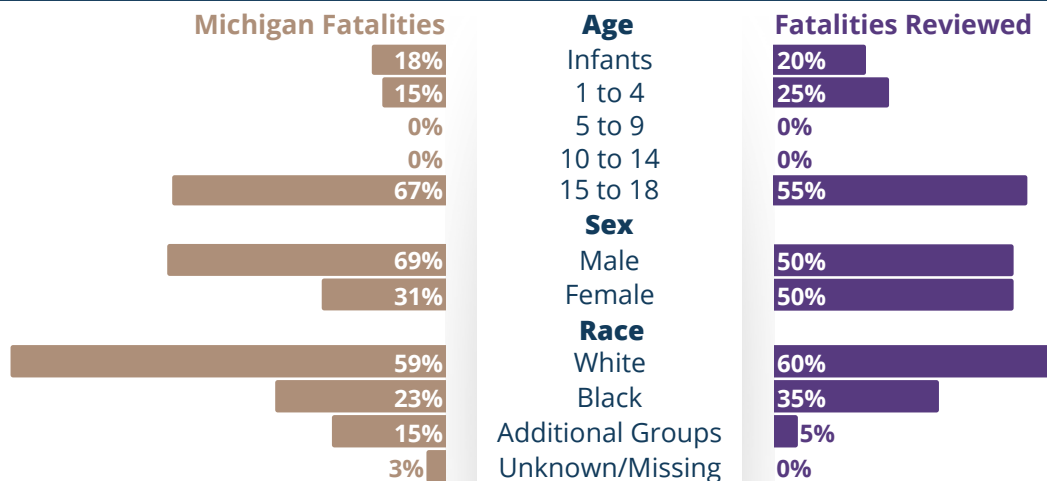
Definitions:

Poisoning: a substance not meant for human consumption is ingested and causes death.

Overdose: a substance for which a safe dosage has been established (e.g., pain and other types of prescribed medications) is ingested in excess and causes death.

Acute intoxication: a substance for which no safe dosage has been established (e.g., cocaine and other types of illegal or illicit substances) is ingested and causes death.

Child's Demographic Information



Characteristics of Poisoning, Overdose, and Acute Intoxication Fatalities

Reviewed by Local CDR Teams

55%

of children whose deaths were reviewed involved opioids.

35%

of children whose deaths were reviewed had more than one type of substance involved in their death.

55%

of the children whose deaths were reviewed were known to have had a prior disability or chronic illness. Of those, 91% were known to have had a mental health or substance use disorder.

Child Death State Advisory Team Recommendations

The Michigan Child Death State Advisory Team (SAT) was established to identify and make recommendations on policy and statutory changes pertaining to child fatalities and to guide statewide prevention, education, and training efforts. The SAT reviews Michigan's child mortality data as well as local child death review team findings and recommendations to identify causes, risk factors, and trends in child deaths. The SAT offers the following recommendations to policymakers to prevent poisoning, overdose, and acute intoxication fatalities:

- Most childhood poisonings happen in the home. Medical staff, children's protective services, Family Resource Centers, and educational systems should educate and provide resources to caregivers related to poisoning prevention and the signs and symptoms of poisoning, overdose, and medication safety, so they are prepared to take appropriate action in the case of an emergency. Furthermore, caregivers and trusted adults should be educated on social norms and framing techniques that can be used to communicate with youth effectively and regularly about substances.
 - Resources:
 - [Preventing Poisoning \(for Parents\) | Nemours KidsHealth](#)
 - [Prevention Tips | Poison Help \(hrs.gov\)](#)
 - [Home - Generation Rx](#)
 - [Poison | Safe Kids Worldwide](#)
- Individuals inherently deserve services that promote health, regardless of whether they use substances. Evidence-based harm reduction strategies minimize negative consequences of drug use (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2024). Increasing the availability and access to high-quality harm reduction services through school systems, Family Resource Centers, and local health departments should be prioritized as a means to decrease the negative effects of substance use and reduce stigma. The SAT recommends that these entities are trained in administering Naloxone, keep Naloxone kits on-site, expand access to Naloxone among populations at higher risk for overdose, and have information publicly available on substance use disorder and related community resources. The [Take A.C.T.I.O.N.](#) First Responder or Community Layperson Naloxone training is available for free online.
- To spread awareness regarding the increase in the presence of fentanyl, the risk associated with taking prescription pills, and to reduce the risk of teen overdose death, the SAT recommends educational systems consider promoting the expansion of evidence-based school and community programs such as [LifeSkills Training \(LST\)](#) or [FentAlert](#), which offers a unique artistic challenge with cash rewards for student-created educational ideas. Brochures, such as [Prescription Drugs: They Can Help But Also Hurt](#), can be ordered free of charge and should be made available to students.
- Medical providers and caregivers should be mindful of medications prescribed to youth as the result of an injury or post-surgery. The [Surgical Pain Management Toolkit](#) from the [Overdose Prevention Engagement Network \(OPEN\)](#) summarizes best practices for prevention of opioid-related complications in children and adolescents by intervening at the point many are first introduced to them: when acute pain is treated after surgery. Providers and parents can find best practices, free educational materials, and sharable resources in this toolkit.

About This Data

The information presented in this brief is based on data gathered through Michigan's local CDR process. **It is important to note that not all child deaths in the state are reviewed. As not every child death is reviewed, Michigan's CDR Program dataset is not population-based and should not be directly compared with vital statistics data, nor should it be used to compute mortality rates.** It is recommended that complementary data sources are examined alongside the CDR Program data when making prevention, policy, or practice decisions.

References

- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics. (2022). *2020-2021 Michigan resident death files* [Unpublished raw data set].
- United States Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2020 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 2021. Data are compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html> on Jan 26, 2024
- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2024). Overdose prevention strategy: harm reduction. <https://www.hhs.gov/overdose-prevention/harm-reduction>.

Contact Us

Additional CDR data, reports, and fact sheets can be found on our [website](#). Please contact the Michigan CDR Program at the Center for Child and Family Health at the Michigan Public Health Institute at MichiganCDR@mphi.org with any questions or requests for additional data.