

The Death Toll

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I request a fact sheet for my city or county?

For more information or to request data for your community, contact the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Bureau of Health Care Analysis and Data Dissemination, at 573-751-6285 or MOSUDORS@health.mo.gov

How are fatal overdose rates calculated ?

Rates are calculated by dividing the number of events among residents living in the selected area by the total number of residents and then multiplying the result by 100,000. Rates are often a better measure for comparing different populations as they account for differences in population size.

How are fatal overdose rates interpreted?

Rates provide a more standardized comparison between populations of different sizes. For example, Boone County and St. Charles County are considerably different in population. However, their rates for drug overdose mortality are very similar despite the difference in population and counts. For example, if a county had a rate of 26.1 for a specific year, that would indicate that for every 100,000 residents, 26.1 individuals died of drug overdose.

Why are some data points not shown at the county level?

Counts less than 5 are not displayed to protect confidentiality.

Why are some rates considered unreliable?

Rates with numerators less than 20 are noted as unreliable because a small change in the numerator would lead to a large change in the rate. Unreliable rates should be interpreted with caution, as they may lead to false conclusions. To increase reliability, more years can be added to increase the numerator.

Why is there a lag in data?

Due to the nature of death certification, it is necessary to wait before publishing data to ensure we provide accurate numbers. The general lag for finalized data is typically 8-12 months after the end of the previous year. On the dashboard, we provide finalized and provisional data. Our finalized data is the most accurate data we can provide, while provisional data is always subject to change. Provisional data by quarter can be located with the **Detailed View** button in the Missouri Resident Overdose Deaths bar chart title.

What is a synthetic opioid vs a semi-synthetic opioid vs a natural opioid?

Synthetic opioids are produced in a laboratory rather than occurring naturally. The primary example of a synthetic opioid is Fentanyl, although Tramadol and Fentanyl analogs are also included in this category. Natural opioids include substances such

as Heroin or morphine. Semi-synthetic opioids include drugs such as oxycodone and hydrocodone.

Although methadone is a synthetic opioid, methadone is excluded from synthetic opioid counts.

What are Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL)?

The years of potential life lost (YPLL) calculation estimates the number of years of life lost due to premature deaths. On this dashboard, years of potential life lost due to drug overdose can be broken out by drug type. Any person who dies at age 75 or above is not considered to have died prematurely and would be excluded from YPLL calculations.

For example, at an individual level, an 18-year-old who dies from a drug overdose would receive a YPLL of 57 (75-18), meaning there were 57 years of potential life lost due to drug overdose for that individual.

YPLL is usually reported as a count (or rate) for a geographic area or a demographic group and involves summing the individual years of life lost.

What is an ICD-10 code?

An ICD-10 code is part of a global system for coding causes of death and classifying medical diagnoses. Our death file data comes from death certificates, in which the cause of death is classified by ICD-10 codes. These ICD-10 codes account for drug overdose deaths of the following intents: Suicide, Homicide, Accidental, and Undetermined.

ICD-10 Codes

Suicide: X60 -X649

Homicide: X85 -X859

Accidental: X40 -X449

Undetermined: Y10 -Y149

Why is Fentanyl not broken out separately from Synthetic Opioids?

Fentanyl deaths do not have a designated ICD-10 code, so the best way to capture Fentanyl deaths from death certificates is synthetic opioids, which do have an ICD-10 code. Most synthetic opioid deaths are from Fentanyl.

Is alcohol included in the 'other drug' category?

Drug overdose deaths are classified by a specific set of ICD-10 codes. These ICD-10 codes do not include deaths caused by alcohol alone. However, if alcohol was listed as a contributing cause along with a drug overdose ICD-10 code, this death would be captured.

How can I cite this data?

Suggested Citation

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<https://health.mo.gov/data/opioids/index.php>

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If using provisional data, include a disclaimer that the data is provisional and subject to change.