

# **Non-fatal overdose emergency department visits**

**2018-2023**



Utah Department of  
**Health & Human**  
Services

## Key take aways

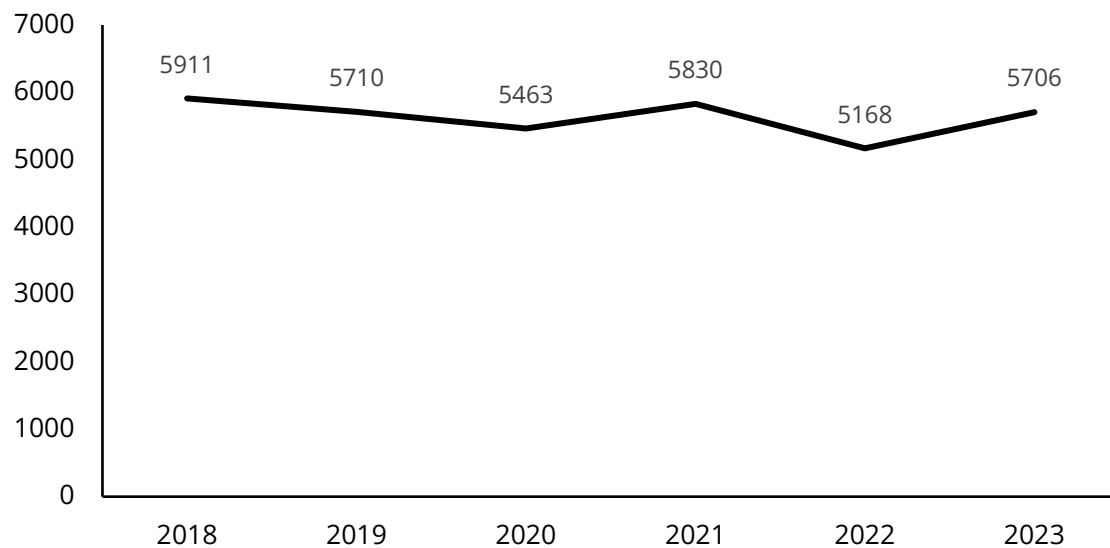
- There has been a decrease in the number of non-fatal overdose emergency department (ED) visits between 2018 and 2023.
- Between 2018 and 2023 the most common drug category related to overdose ED visits was opioids.
- Individuals aged 35 to 54 years old had the highest rate of non-fatal overdose-related ED visits between 2018 and 2023.
- People who use syringe service programs are 5 times more likely to enter treatment for substance use disorder than those who don't.

## Non-fatal overdose emergency department visit trends

The number of non-fatal overdose emergency department (ED) visits between 2018 and 2023 were at their highest in 2018. From 2018 to 2020 the numbers decreased and then spiked in 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of non-fatal ED visits decreased from 2021 to 2022 and there was another spike in 2023.

### Figure 1. From 2018 to 2023, the number of non-fatal overdose ED visits decreased.

Number of non-fatal overdose ED visits, Utah, 2018–2023



The Utah Department of Health and Human Services monitors non-fatal overdoses among 3 drug categories:

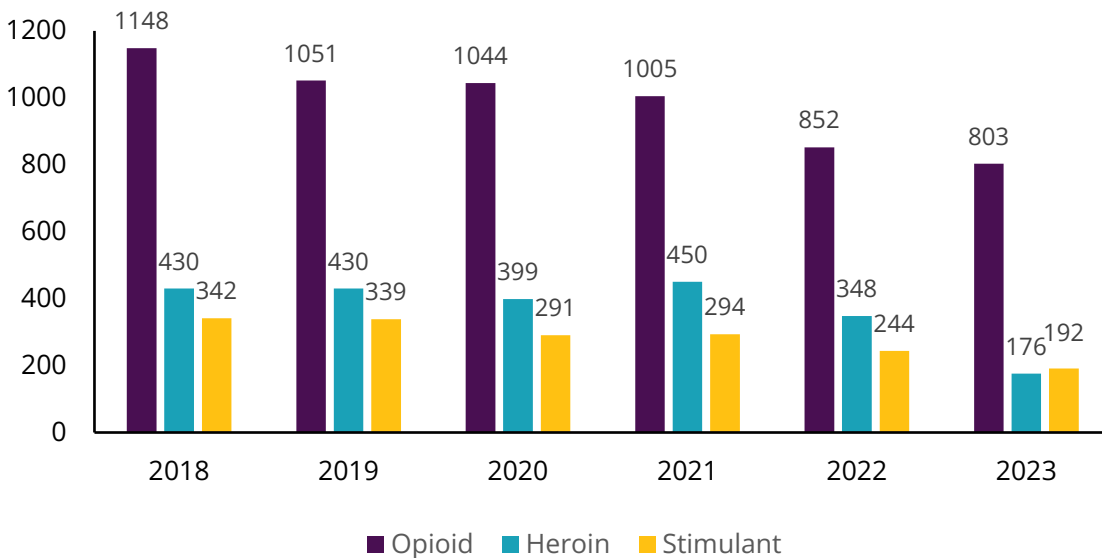
- Heroin-related
- Opioid-related
- Stimulants-related

Opioids were the most common substance found in non-fatal overdose emergency department (ED) visits from 2018 to 2023. Opioid-related overdose ED visits peaked in 2018 and steadily decreased through 2023. Heroin-related overdoses ED visits were consistent until 2023 when they decreased by nearly 50%. Stimulant-related overdoses ED visits steadily decreased from 2018 to 2023 following a similar pattern to the opioid-related overdose ED visits.

Fentanyl is included in the opioid-related overdose counts. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Any drug not purchased from a licensed pharmacy could contain a lethal dose of fentanyl.

**Figure 2. Non-fatal opioid-related overdose ED visits peaked in 2018 with a steady decline through 2023.**

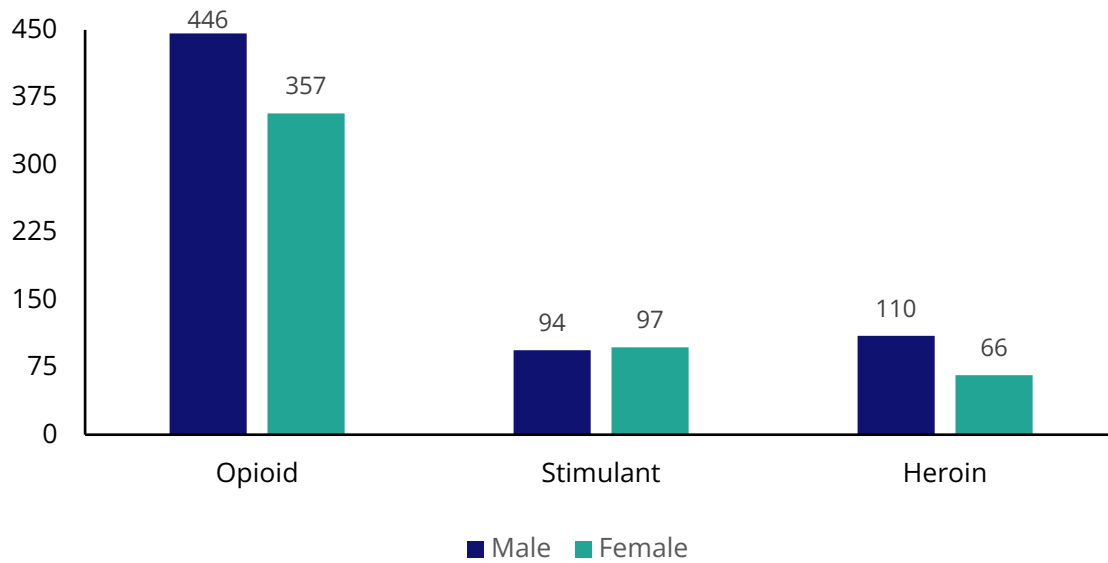
Number of non-fatal overdose-related ED visits by drug category, Utah, 2018–2023



Opioids were involved with the most non-fatal overdose ED visits for both sexes. Males had a higher number of non-fatal overdose ED visits from the heroin and opioid drug categories than females. Females had a higher number of non-fatal overdose ED visits from the stimulant drug category.

**Figure 3. The number of opioid drug category non-fatal overdose ED visits were the highest for both females and males.**

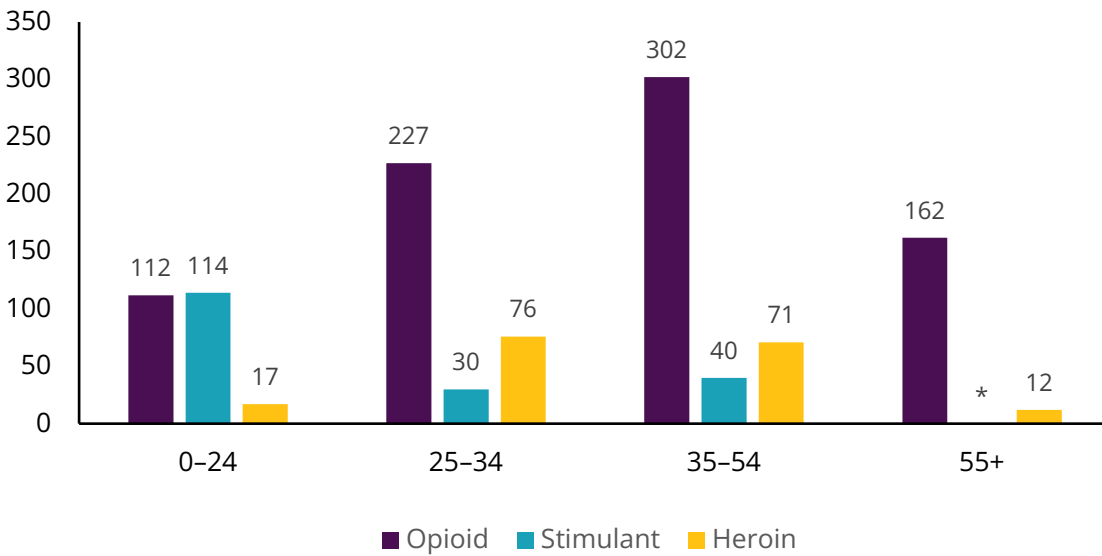
Number of non-fatal overdose-related ED visits by sex and drug category, Utah, 2018–2023



Individuals aged 35–54 years old had the highest number of overdose-related ED visits in the opioid drug category and of all age groups. Individuals aged 25–34 years old had the highest number of overdose-related ED visits for the heroin drug category. Individuals aged 0–24 years old had the highest number of overdose-related ED visits for the stimulant drug category.

**Figure 4. Individuals aged 55 years and older had the fewest overdose-related ED visits of all age groups.**

Number of overdose-related ED visits by age and drug category, Utah, 2018–2023



\*Counts fewer than 11 were suppressed for confidentiality.

In Utah, drug poisoning continues to be the leading cause of injury deaths. During 2023, 606 Utahns died from a drug overdose. Utah is one of 2 states that has not seen a decrease in the number of drug overdoses each year. A non-fatal overdose can turn into a fatal overdose very easily.

Syringe exchange programs are community-based programs that prevent health problems through a range of services. They are designed to help people who use drugs live safer, healthier lives. Individuals who use syringe service programs are 5 times more likely to enter treatment for substance use disorder than those who don't.

There are 14 community-based syringe service programs across Utah. These programs provide life-saving overdose prevention and response services at no cost. Some services include:

- Linkage to substance use disorder treatment
- Rapid HIV and hepatitis C testing
- Sterile syringes and injection supplies
- Drug-checking materials (such as fentanyl test strips)
- Sharp containers for safe syringe disposal

## **If you choose to use. Bring the basics:**

**Fentanyl test strips** — Small strips that can tell if your dose contains fentanyl. If fentanyl is detected, think twice about using your drug. Any amount of fentanyl could be lethal.

**Naloxone** — A medication that can temporarily reverse an opioid overdose, giving just enough time for medical personnel to respond.

**Another person** — Someone who can stick with you and be on the lookout for signs of an overdose. Someone you can count on to administer naloxone if needed and call 911 for help.

Visit [opidemic.utah.gov](https://opidemic.utah.gov) for more overdose resources.

## **Resource**

- Utah's Indicator-based Information System for Public Health (IBIS), Utah Department of Health and Human Services, 2025 data queried.