



Teens and Substance Use Data Brief

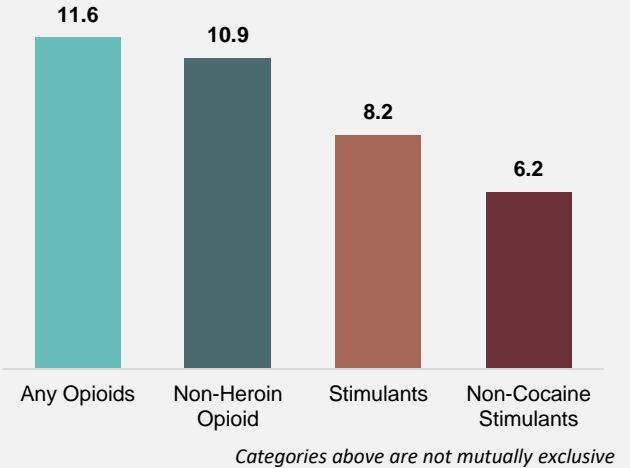
Teens are a uniquely vulnerable age group within the context of harmful substance use. Youth who report using illicit substances are prone to lower self-reported life satisfaction, compared with those who do not ([Frontiers in Psychology, 2023](#)). Most people who later develop problematic substance use are first exposed to drugs in adolescence ([J Child Psychol Psychiatry](#)).

From 2019-2022, 19 Snohomish County youth ages 14-19 died due to a drug overdose. Nearly all of these overdoses occurred in a private residence where friends or family were in the building but in a different room. This theme is also seen statewide.

Toxicology results available for 18 of the deaths show fentanyl was involved. Fentanyl and fentanyl metabolites, which result from the body processing fentanyl, were listed as the cause of death ([WA DOH](#)).

Overdose hospitalization rates for this age group show non-heroin opioids (primarily fentanyl) making up the most common substance being used by these patients (figure top right). Non-cocaine stimulants (primarily methamphetamine) are also involved with many hospitalizations, and often the two are used simultaneously ([WA DOH](#)).

Teen overdose hospitalization rates in Snohomish County per 100k population, 2018-2022



Keeping naloxone in your home could save a life.
Nearly all teens who died from drug overdose were in a home with a friend or family in the next room.

Teens can be prone to risky behaviors while their brains are still developing ([J Child Psychol Psychiatry](#)). Research has identified opportunities for prevention and intervention for this age group ([J Addict.](#)). While some protective factors are on the individual level, there are many things families and communities can do to prevent substance use initiation and intervene before severe outcomes occur.

What protects teens against substance use?

- ✦ Individual optimism and mindfulness
- ✦ Family members with a good understanding of substance use topics
- ✦ Peer selection and socialization
- ✦ School connectedness and adult support
- ✦ School-based education surrounding resilience and self-care

(BMC Public Health)

For more information on how to get no-cost naloxone (Narcan), the overdose reversal medicine, visit:
stopoverdose.org

To learn more about talking to your teen about substance use, visit:
getthefactsrx.com/parent-toolkit

Washington Teen Link is an online and phone resource for teens and those who care about them.
866-833-6546