



Drug Overdose Deaths in Ottawa, 2000-2015

- Based on the average of the last five years (2011-2015), 36 Ottawa residents die from **unintentional**¹ drug overdose annually, representing 71% of the 51 total annual drug overdose deaths. Two-thirds of unintentional overdose deaths (24 per year) were due to opioids.
- During the most current year (2015) for which data are available, 48 Ottawa residents died from unintentional drug overdose; 60% (29) of these were due to opioids and in 14 deaths **fentanyl** was involved. Since 2014, fentanyl has been involved in the largest proportion of drug overdose deaths in Ottawa.
- Since 2001, Ottawa has had a lower rate of death from unintentional drug overdose than the rest of Ontario; however, in 2015 this gap narrowed because the rate of drug overdose increased 32% in Ottawa between 2014 and 2015, but only 6% in the rest of Ontario.
- Between 2000 to 2015, the rate of death due to unintentional drug overdose from any drug increased 23% in Ottawa and 139% in the rest of Ontario.
- The increase between 2000 and 2015 was gradual in the rest of Ontario. However, in Ottawa, there was a noticeable increase in unintentional drug overdose deaths in 2009.
- The increase in unintentional overdose deaths in Ottawa and in the rest of Ontario has been due to increased unintentional opioid overdose deaths.
- In Ottawa, unintentional overdose deaths due to opioids were 2.7 times higher during 2009–2015 (24 per year) compared to 2003–2008 (9 per year).
- In 2015, there was an increase in unintentional overdose deaths due to non-opioids (19 in that year compared to an average of 11 per year in the previous 5 years).
- An average of 1.8 times more men than women die of unintentional drug overdose (2011–2015).
- An average of 88% (21 per year) of unintentional **opioid** overdose deaths in Ottawa occurred among adults aged 20 to 59 (2011–2015).
- The number of overdoses due to injection drug use cannot be reliably estimated because mode of administration is not routinely or systematically captured in the death record.²

Suggested citation: Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, extracted December 2, 2016. Analyzed by Epidemiology Team, Ottawa Public Health.

Note that 2015 data are preliminary and subject to change once the statistical year has been completed. Drug data include toxicity due to drugs, and drugs and alcohol together.

¹ Unintentional overdoses include deaths considered accidental (89% of unintentional) or of undetermined intent (11% of unintentional).

² Personal communication. Andrew Stephen (Information Management Lead, Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario) and Louise McNaughton-Filion (Regional Supervising Coroner for Ottawa Region). April 14, 2016. Ottawa Public Health.