



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

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COVID PANDEMIC— DRUG OVERDOSES ON THE RISE

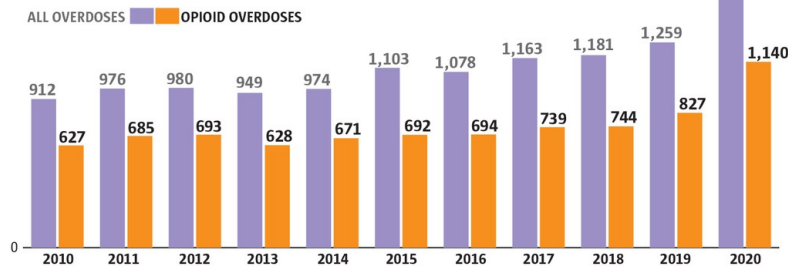
The stresses caused by the COVID pandemic have also shown themselves in drug use and drug overdoses. In 2020, fatal drug overdoses increased by more than 30% over 2019 in Washington State. And fatal opioid overdoses increased by nearly 40%. This is the most overdose deaths in a decade.

Snohomish County continued a three year trend of growth in overdose deaths in 2020:

Year	Deaths
2018	184
2019	251
2020	303

Overdose deaths rising in Washington

More people in Washington died of drug overdoses last year than any year in recent memory. Data for 2020 is preliminary and numbers are likely to rise.



Source: Washington State Department of Health: Center for Health Statistics

MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

And, the first 5 months of 2021 show the same pace of deaths as in 2020 with 121 overdose deaths in 2021 and 120 deaths in 2020.

The reason for the deaths are no doubt due to more people turning to drugs and alcohol to deal with the stresses of the pandemic that include financial, medical uncertainty, employment, and uncertain housing conditions.

According to the Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force (SRDTF), fentanyl is the most prevalent drug in overdose deaths. It notes that the majority of overdose patients have multiple substances in their blood with a mix of opiates or heroin with methamphetamine. This practice is called “speed balling” on the street.

Also, more people have become isolated socially because of the restraints placed on all of us in order to control the coronavirus. More people are using drugs alone, giving more opportunity for individuals to overdose and die alone.



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OPIOID OVERDOSE—WHAT TO DO

A heroin or opioid (fentanyl, Oxycontin, Vicodin, Percocet, etc.) overdose may look like someone is sleeping. If you come across someone who is a known opioid user or you see pill bottles, needles, or alcohol near them act:

1. Check if they are breathing, are gurgling, have clammy, cool skin, blue lips or nails. Try to wake them up: shake them, rub your knuckles hard over their chest bone. **IF THEY DO NOT WAKE UP, ACT FAST!**
2. **CALL 911.** Tell them you see someone not breathing and give them your location.
3. Start rescue breathing and give naloxone if you have it.
4. Stay with them, even if they wake up, until help arrives.

For more information, check this out,

<https://www.snohd.org/DocumentCenter/View/157/Your-Best-Defense-Against-Opioid-Overdose--Information-That-Can-Help-Save-a-Life-PDF>

CURRENT DRUGS— FENTANYL & METH

The most trafficked drugs in Snohomish County are fentanyl and methamphetamine. Heroin is third with cocaine and other substances falling further back in popularity.

Fentanyl, meth, and heroin have their origins with Mexican gangs, called Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCO) by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The gangs, primarily the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), move the drugs from Mexico to U.S. markets on well established routes across the southwest border.

Fentanyl is sold in the form of illicit counterfeit M30 pills, also known as “blues.” Fentanyl is used for pain relief and is 100 times more potent than morphine and 50 times more potent than heroin.

Fentanyl distributors often mix it with other drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and meth to increase their profits.

Fentanyl, like other opioids, produces relaxation, euphoria, pain relief, sedation, confusion, drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, urinary retention, pupil constriction, and respiratory depression. Signs of overdose include stupor, changes in pupillary size, cold and clammy skin, cyanosis (blue skin), coma, and respiratory failure leading to death.

Methamphetamine (meth) is a stimulant. It can come in a pill or powder form. Crystal meth looks like glass fragments or

shiny blue-white “rocks” of various sizes. It can be swallowed, snorted, injected, or smoked. To intensify its effects, users may take higher doses, take it more frequently, or change the method of intake.

Meth has potent stimulant properties on the central nervous systems and is highly addictive. It can cause a brief, intense rush or a long-lasting high.

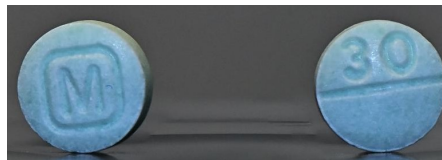
Chronic meth users can exhibit violent behavior, anxiety, confusion, in-

omnia, paranoia, aggression, visual and auditory hallucination, mood disturbances, and delusions (such as sensation of insects

creeping on or under the skin.

Meth causes increased wakefulness, increased physical activity, decreased appetite, rapid breathing and heart rate, irregular heartbeat, increased blood pressure, and overheating. High doses can result in death from stroke, heart attack, or multiple problems caused by overheating.

Mexican TCO’s are the main suppliers of meth in the U.S. with domestic U.S. production in steady decline since 2004.



Fentanyl in the form of counterfeit M30 pills

CURRENT DRUGS- HEROIN & COCAINE

Heroin is a highly addictive drug that produces a surge of euphoria or “rush” followed by a twilight state of sleep and wakefulness.

Heroin is sold as a white or brownish powder, or as a black sticky substance that is called “black tar heroin” on the streets. Most street heroin is “cut” with other drugs such as fentanyl or with sugar, starch, powdered milk, or quinine.

It can be injected, or if it is of high purity it can be smoked or snorted.

Its major effect is addiction. With regular use, the user becomes tolerant to the heroin and must use more to achieve the same intensity.

Its effects resemble other opioids with drowsiness, respiratory depression, constricted pupils, nausea, a warm flushing of the skin, dry mouth, and heavy extremities.

Users run a high risk of an overdose or death since they rarely know what has been added. Signs of an overdose include slow and shallow breathing, blue lips and fingernails, clammy skin, convulsions, coma and death.



White powder heroin

Cocaine is an intense, euphoria-producing stimulant that has strong addictive potential.

Cocaine is produced from coca leaves in remote jungle labs of Bolivia, Peru, and Columbia. Once produced, cocaine is transported through Mexico by Mexican gangs to the U.S.

It is sold as a white, crystalline powder that is often cut with sugars or fentanyl. Cocaine base (crack) comes in irregularly shaped chunks (or “rocks”) of a whitish solid.

Cocaine can be snorted or injected into veins after being dissolved in water. Crack is smoked, alone or with marijuana.

Cocaine causes euphoria that may be quick and intense if smoked or injected or less intense and slow if snorted. Tolerance develops rapidly causing users to take higher and higher doses.

Prolonged use usually causes paranoia. Cocaine can also cause high blood pressure, and heart rate, dilated pupils, insomnia, and loss of appetite.



Cocaine powder

SRDTF- HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force targets high level and multinational drug traffickers. Street level drug trafficking is handled by the Sheriff’s Office and the cities within Snohomish County.

If you see, or suspect drug activity in your neighborhood, call 911 and ask to talk to a deputy.

Some signs that you have drug trafficking in your neighborhood include,

- *Excessive traffic, foot or car, to and from a house.*
- *Threats of intimidation connected to a residence.*
- *Open exchange of drugs and money.*
- *Gang activity.*
- *Graffiti.*
- *Sudden increase in criminal activity.*

DRUG ADDICTION- GETTING HELP

Substance abuse and addiction is a major problem in the U.S. The COVID pandemic has made matters worse by adding more stress to our lives in our health, financial situation, and in some cases with our relationships.

As a citizen, you can help law enforcement to reduce the flow of drugs by calling 911 when you see or suspect drug trafficking activity in your neighborhood. You can also help by knowing what to do if you come across someone who appears not to be breathing and may be experiencing an overdose.

If you are addicted to a drug or you know someone who is addicted, the first step to recovery is to ask for help. Addiction not only affects the person who is addicted, it affects their friends and family. And part of recovery is learning about addiction and where you can get help on a road to recovery.

There are organizations that can help. The following are resources that can help you understand drugs and addiction better and can help with referrals for organizations that can help with your recovery:

Washington Recovery Help Line-

<http://www.warecoveryhelpline.org/>

Phone- (866) 789-1511

FindTreatment.gov-

<https://findtreatment.gov/>

(sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

Snohomish Health District-

<https://www.snohd.org/175/Heroin-Opioids>

Snohomish County Human Services-

<https://snohomishcountywa.gov/462/Assessment-and-Treatment>

United States Drug Enforcement Administration-

<https://www.dea.gov/drug-information>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-

<https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/index.html>



OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

<https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/311/Office-of-Neighborhoods>

Homeless Outreach-

Sgt. James Chelin
Phone: (425) 508-8221
Email: james.chelin@snoco.org

SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

NEWSLETTER INFO

EDITOR

Steve Moller

If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org

TIP LINES



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477