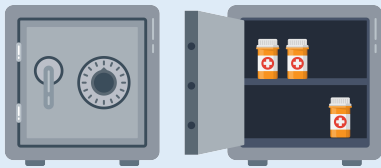


Self-Inflicted Drug Poisonings Among North Carolina Youth, 2020-2024

Prevention is Key

Youth (10-18) drug* poisonings represent a significant and increasing public health issue in North Carolina. Distinguishing between self-inflicted and unintentional poisonings is important to understand in order to inform prevention efforts.

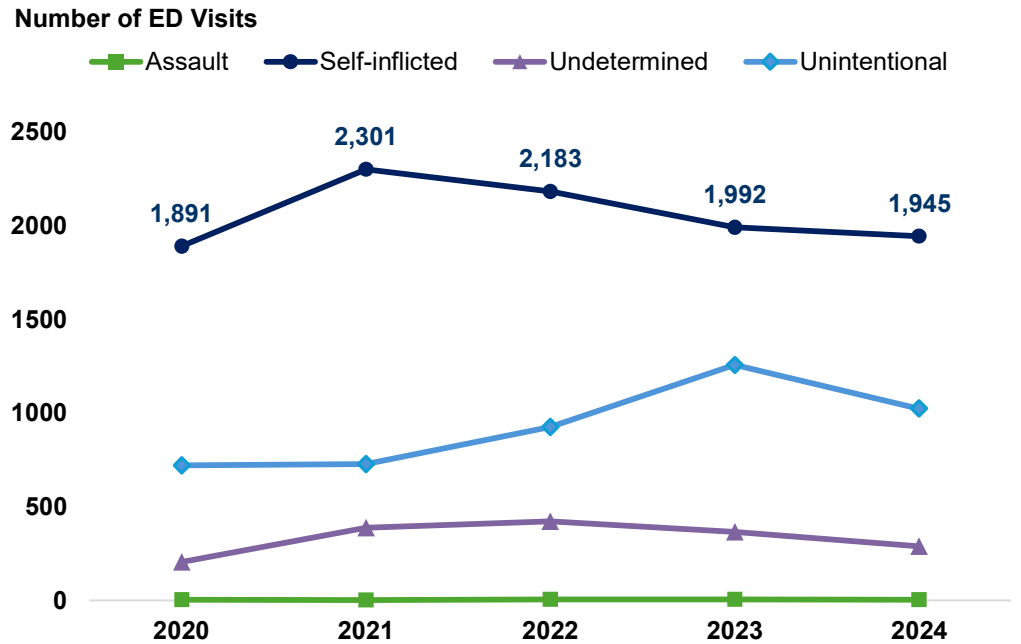
Fortunately, interventions such as Lock Your Meds are effective at preventing poisonings, both unintentional and self-inflicted. Increased adoption of these interventions can help address self-inflicted poisonings among youth populations in North Carolina.



*drug refers to any prescription medication, over the counter, or illicit drug use

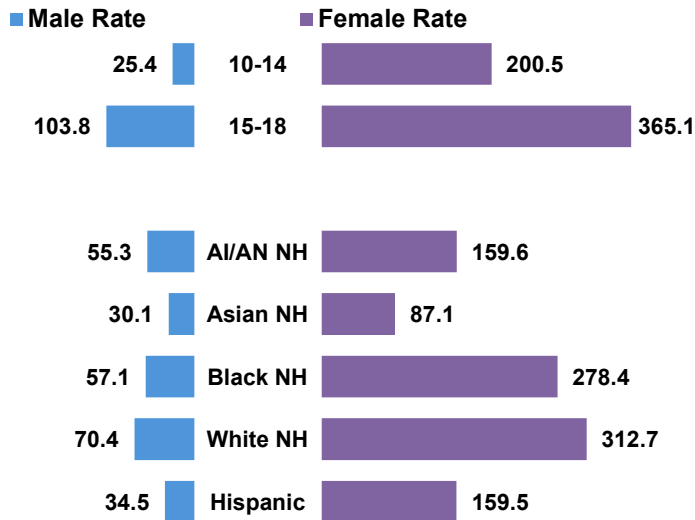
The majority of youth drug poisoning emergency department (ED) visits are self-inflicted.[^]

Youth (10-18) Drug Poisoning ED Visits by Intent, 2020-2024



[^]Self-inflicted injury describes when someone injures themselves on purpose. Not all self-inflicted injury is with the intent to die.

Youth Self-Inflicted Drug Poisoning ED Visit Rates (per 100,000) by Demographic Group, 2020-2024



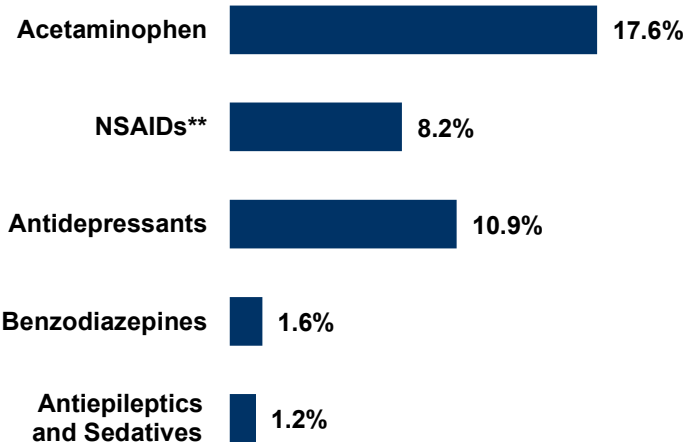
AI/AN = American Indian/Alaska Native; NH = non-Hispanic

- The youth self-inflicted drug poisoning rate was highest for females ages 15-18 (365.1 ED visits per 100,000 population) followed by White NH females (312.7 ED visits per 100,000).
- The overall rate of youth self-inflicted drug poisoning ED visits are 4.5 times higher for females compared to males.

- Over-the-counter (OTC) medication makes up a large percentage of youth self-inflicted poisonings seen in the ED, with acetaminophen present in 17.6% of visits.

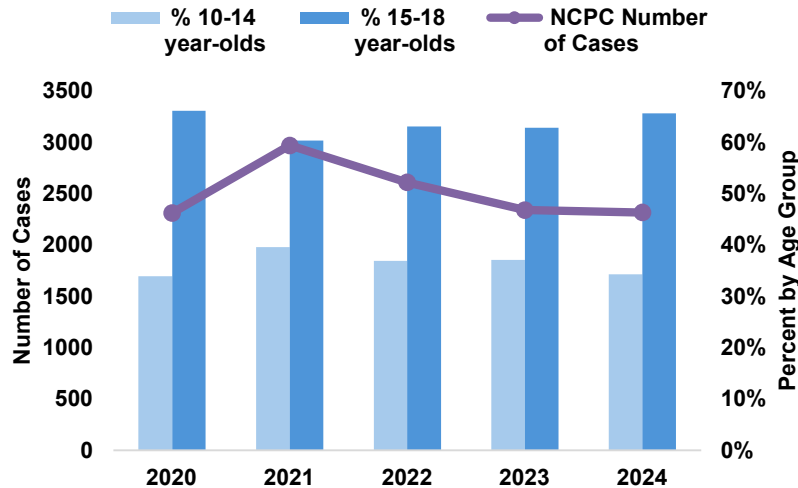
- Because youth use OTC medications such as acetaminophen to self-harm, it is important to lock away all medication, both prescription and over-the-counter.

Youth Self-Inflicted Drug Poisoning ED Visits by Drug Type, 2020-2024



**NSAIDs= Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs; examples include ibuprofen and aspirin

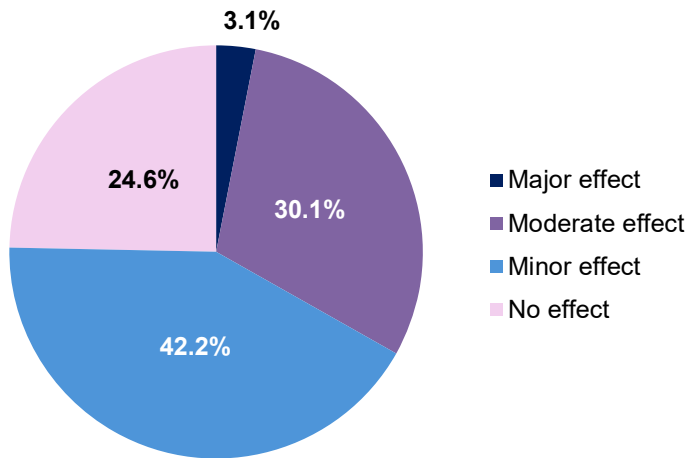
Youth Suspected Suicide Attempt Poisoning Cases by Age Group, North Carolina Poison Control (NCPC), 2020-2024



- The majority of suicide attempt NCPC cases among youth were ages 15-18 (63.5%).
- Over the five-year period (2020-2024), there were six cases of youth self-inflicted poisonings reported by poison control that resulted in death.
- Major effects are life threatening or result in significant disability, whereas minor and moderate effects can be resolved with appropriate treatment. Thankfully, death and major effects weren't common, however, even minor effects are worth preventing.

*NCPC has a category for suicide attempt cases, but not a general self-inflicted category. While there is likely a large overlap between ED self-inflicted poisoning visits and NCPC suicide attempt cases, it is important to clarify that not all self-inflicted injury is with the intent to die.

Youth Suspected Suicide Attempt Poisoning NCPC Cases by Medical Outcome, 2020-2024



Ways to Keep Youth Safe at Home



- Keep everyone at home safe by locking up medications
- Put medicine away immediately after each use, even if there will be more doses in a few hours
- Avoid buying over-the-counter pain medications in bulk
- Put all medicines in a safe lockbox
- Visit Lock Your Meds (<http://lockyourmeds.org/nc/>) for more information

State Resource Partners

NCDHHS Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services
<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/mhddsas>

NC Injury and Violence Prevention's Suicide Prevention Website
<https://injuryfreenc.dph.ncdhhs.gov/preventionResources/Suicide.htm>

NC Injury and Violence Prevention's Overdose Website
<https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/programs-services/chronic-disease-and-injury/injury-and-violence-prevention-branch/north-carolina-overdose-epidemic-data>

NCDHHS Division of Child and Family Well-being
<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/division-child-and-family-well-being>

National Resources

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center
<http://www.sprc.org/>

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
<https://afsp.org/>

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
 Division of Public Health
 Injury and Violence Prevention Branch