

UNPACK THE STORY

SEATTLE AND THE OVERDOSE CRISIS

RESOURCE SHEET

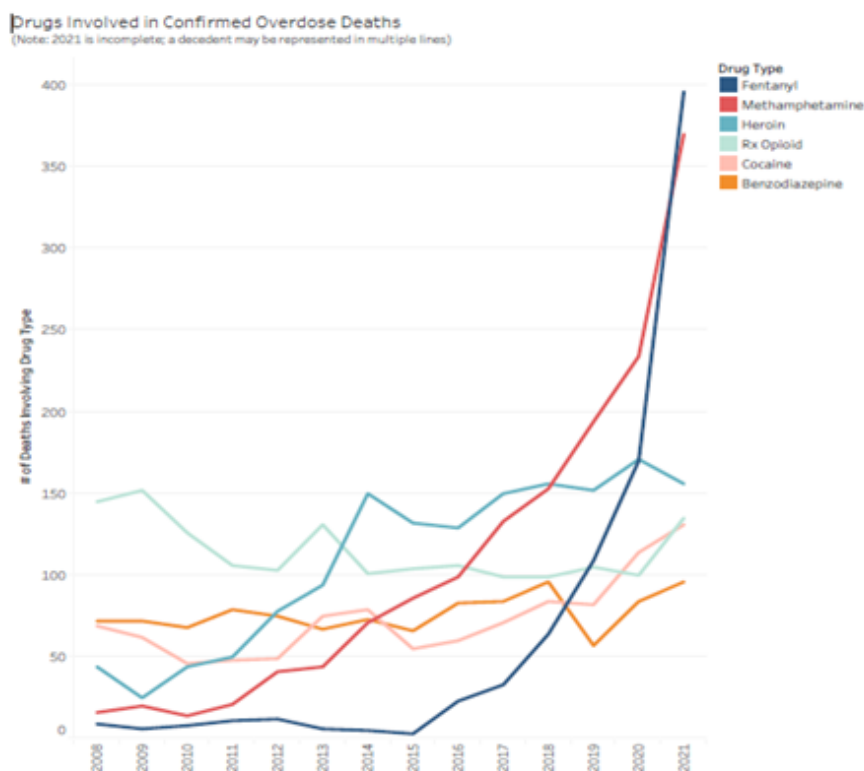
Compiled by Anna Boiko-Weyrauch

A few stats

Last year 718 people in King County died from an overdose (involving any substance). That's an increase of around 114 percent from 2016 to 2021, according to data from Public Health–Seattle & King County.

King County data show overdose deaths in 2021 were more frequently happening among young people, people of color, and residents of South King County compared to five years ago.

Fentanyl use has become more common among drug users. In 2019, 18 percent of respondents to a survey said they had used fentanyl in the past three months and no one identified it as their “main drug,” according to the WA State Syringe Service Program Health Survey. In 2021, 42 percent of respondents said they’d used fentanyl in the past three months and three percent said it was their main drug.



Title of Graph: Overdose deaths by drug involved.

Source: Public Health–Seattle & King County

Links to more resources at linktr.ee/unpackthestorydrugs

Where do fentanyl and meth come from? How do they get here?

Precursor chemicals are sent from China to Mexico where they're produced into fentanyl and meth and then smuggled into the United States, Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent in Charge, Frank Tarantino, told KUOW's Anna Boiko-Weyrauch in an interview Dec. 17, 2021.

"Drug networks are very creative in terms of how they smuggle their products," Tarantino said. "There are all sorts of different techniques where they will weave the powder into clothing and/or they will liquefy it and saturate clothing and let it dry, and then ship it," he said.

Tarantino said they also secrete liquified drugs into computer parts or machine parts.

Cartels use FedEx, the US mail system, and couriers hiding drugs in cars to get their products in to the US, he said.

The two most prevalent cartels are Sinaloa and Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) in this region, Tarantino said.

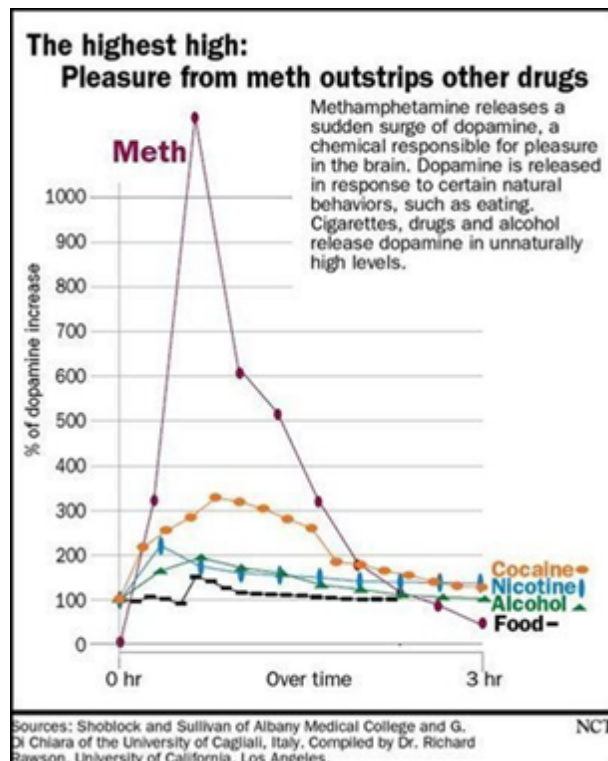
Comparative effect of meth on your brain

KUOW's Kamna Shastri interviewed 18 year-old Duane Noble Pasco Boggs. He started to drink alcohol around age 12 and was quickly addicted to it. Later he started using meth.

"It made everything around me interesting... But on top of it, I was very euphoric. I was very happy with my life. I was like, 'Oh, I love homework.'... it basically kind of like put me in a manic episode... But when I was off it, holy fucking shit! It's like having your brain squeezed like a sponge and all the dopamine and endorphins that you have gained are just disintegrating."

More info

Have an idea for a story? Contact health reporters **Kate Walters** (kateo@kuow.org) or **Eilis O'Neill** (eoNeill@kuow.org), or local Morning Edition producer **Katie Campbell** (kcampbell@kuow.org).



Graphic by the San Diego Union-Tribune

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