**Xylazine-Related Overdose Deaths in Massachusetts, 2019 - 2022**

This publication contains information on xylazine-related overdose deaths in Massachusetts between 2019 and 2022.

**Xylazine Facts**

* Xylazine is added to illegal drugs, often without users’ knowledge.
* Xylazine may cause skin ulcers, wounds, heavy sedation, and fatal respiratory depression.
* Wounds may occur regardless of how xylazine enters the body.
* Xylazine is approved for veterinary use only.

**Counts of Overdose Deaths Involving Xylazine**

Overdose deaths involving xylazine surged in 2022 and likely doubled in 2023. Xylazine was present in approximately 10% of overdose deaths in 2023. When looking at overdose deaths involving xylazine in Massachusetts, there were:

* 0 deaths in 2019
* 9 deaths in 2020
* 11 deaths in 2021
* 115 deaths in 2022
* 230 deaths in 2023 (according to preliminary data)

**Overdose Deaths Involving Xylazine, by Sex, Age, Race, and Ethnicity**

**Sex**

* 7 in 10 decedents were male
* 3 in 10 were female

**Age**

* The ages of people who died from xylazine-related overdose have a normal, or bell-shaped distribution.
* Counts under 6 were suppressed, which included persons under 25 and over 64.
* The age range with the most deaths was 35 to 44, with a total of 42 deaths.

**Race and Ethnicity**

The rates per 100,000 population by race/ethnicity were as follows:

* 2.7 for Hispanic/Latinx
* 2.2 for White, non-Hispanic
* 0.6 for other races, non-Hispanic

**Overdose Deaths Involving Xylazine, by County**

* Hampden and Worcester counties had the highest counts and rates per 100,000 population.
  + The count for Hampden County was 31 and the rate was 6.7 per 100,000 population.
  + The count for Worcester County was 36 and the rate was 4.2 per 100,000 population.

**Other Facts**

* Fentanyl was detected in all overdose deaths involving xylazine. Cocaine was detected in more than half.
* People whose overdose included xylazine were more likely to die before being treated in the Emergency Department, compared to all other overdose deaths.

**Source Information**

* The data used to create this infographic were obtained from the State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS).
* Rates were calculated using population estimates from the UMass Donahue Institute and data from the United States Census Bureau.

**Resources**

* Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline

Call 800-327-5050, text "HOPE" to 800327, or visit <https://helplinema.org>

* SafeSpot Overdose Prevention Hotline

Call 800-972-0590

* StreetCheck (Community Drug Checking)

Visit <https://www.info.streetcheck.org>

**Read our Clinical Advisory:** [Clinical Advisory on Presence of Xylazine in the Massachusetts Drug Supply April 12, 2023 | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/clinical-advisory/clinical-advisory-on-presence-of-xylazine-in-the-massachusetts-drug-supply-april-12-2023)