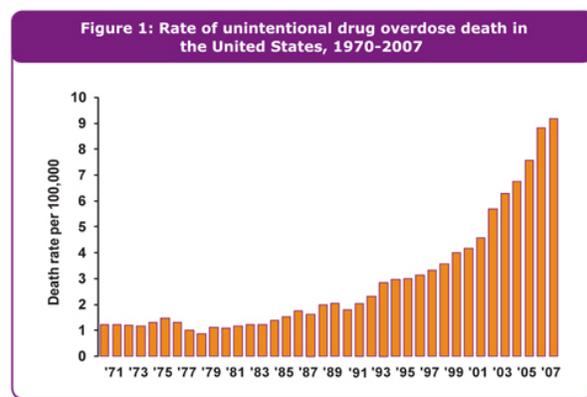


## Drug and Alcohol-related Poisoning

According to the latest statistics, drug overdose deaths are among the leading causes of death due to unintentional injury.

Drug overdose death rates in the United States have never been higher, rising steadily since 1970. In fact, rates have increased five fold since 1990.

According to state health officials, accidental drug-related poisoning has surpassed motor vehicle crashes as a leading cause of death in Connecticut. From 2005-2007, there were 952 drug and alcohol deaths in Connecticut.



Source: National Vital Statistics System

During this time period, there were 2,578 hospitalizations and 7,140 poisoning-related emergency department visits in the state. In addition, there were 106 suicide deaths due to poisoning (drugs and alcohol), and over 3,000 hospitalizations and over 3,000 emergency department visits related to suicide attempt drug poisoning.

A poisoning occurs when a person's exposure to a natural or manmade substance has an undesirable effect. A drug poisoning occurs when that substance is an illegal, prescription, or over-the-counter drug. Most fatal poisonings in the United States result from drug poisoning.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the increase in drug overdose deaths is largely due to the use of prescription opioid painkillers, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), and methadone.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health offers the following tips to help prevent accidental drug-related poisoning:

- Talk to your doctor and/or pharmacist about medication purpose, dosage, side effects and potential interactions with other drugs and/or food.
- Keep medications in original containers and locked away if children are in the home or visiting.
- Seek help and /or use a 7-day a week pill box if you take many medications every day.
- Get care for mental and behavioral health issues.

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- Supervise medication use by children and teens.
- Keep narcotic and sedative medications prescribed for adults in private adult spaces.
- Program emergency numbers, such as the Poison Control Hotline **(1-800-222-1222)**, into your phone to call in the event of a poisoning or overdose emergency or dial 9-1-1.

During National Public Health Week, April 4-10, 2011, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is focusing attention on preventing injuries, a leading cause of death, disability and illness in Connecticut. The DPH Injury Prevention Program analyzes injury data, provides information and works with a variety of public and private partners on reducing and preventing injuries.

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