

# US Drug Overdose Deaths Fall Nearly 27 Percent to Lowest Level in 5 Years

The sharpest annual drop on record was driven by a decline in fentanyl-related deaths, the CDC said. But meth and cocaine fatalities increased.

24

19

Save



Packets of fentanyl and methamphetamine seized from a truck crossing into Arizona from Mexico are displayed during a news conference at the Port of Nogales, Ariz., on Jan. 31, 2019. U.S. Customs and Border Protection/Reuters



By Tom Ozimek

5/14/2025

Updated: 5/14/2025

AA Print

Drug overdose deaths in the United States dropped sharply in 2024, falling to their lowest level since before the pandemic, according to

provisional [data](#) released on May 14 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The report estimates that 80,391 people died of a drug overdose in 2024—a 26.9 percent decline from 110,037 in 2023, marking the largest one-year drop since the agency began collecting comparable data more than four decades ago.

It's the second consecutive annual decrease after overdose deaths surged during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Social isolation, disruptions to treatment, and other factors helped push fatalities to a peak of nearly 115,000 in 2023.

All but two states—Nevada and South Dakota—recorded declines last year, with especially steep drops in hard-hit areas such as West Virginia, which reported a 43.5 percent decrease. While the final figures may shift slightly as data are finalized, the CDC data indicate an unmistakable downward trend.

The decline was driven almost entirely by a reduction in fentanyl-related deaths. The synthetic opioid—at least 50 times more potent than heroin—was linked to more than 76,000 deaths in 2023, but that number dropped to just over 48,000 in 2024.

Experts have cited several possible reasons for the downturn, including expanded access to the overdose reversal drug naloxone—sold as Narcan—which became available over the counter in 2023. It is now carried by most first responders. Increased use of addiction treatment medications and changes in drug supply patterns may also be factors.

Despite the improvement, the new data revealed troubling increases in deaths tied to stimulants such as methamphetamine and cocaine.

Fatalities involving meth rose from 29,456 to 37,096, while cocaine-related deaths jumped by about 8,000, reaching 30,833. Since overdose statistics often overlap—many deaths involve multiple substances—it remains unclear how many of these fatalities involved stimulants alone.

The Trump administration has intensified efforts to choke off the international supply chain responsible for flooding the country with synthetic opioids.

While most fentanyl consumed in the United States is manufactured in Mexico, the raw chemicals used to make it overwhelmingly come from China. A Pulitzer Prize-winning [investigation](#) by Reuters last

year exposed how Chinese chemical suppliers and Mexican cartels continue to enable the epidemic.

Reporters were able to legally purchase all the chemicals and equipment needed to produce \$3 million worth of fentanyl for just \$3,600—exploiting a since-closed customs loophole known as the “de minimis” rule. That exemption had allowed goods valued at or under \$800 to be imported duty-free.

A recent [report](#) from the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) found that Beijing is not only failing to stop the export of fentanyl precursors but is actively encouraging it.

According to the report, the Chinese regime offers tax rebates and state subsidies to companies producing illegal synthetic opioid components, fueling what lawmakers call a deliberate assault on the United States.

“Through its actions, as our report has revealed, the Chinese Communist Party is telling us that it wants more fentanyl entering our country,” Select Committee Chair Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) said during an April 16, 2024, hearing. “It wants the chaos and devastation that has resulted from this epidemic. And yes, that means more dead Americans.”

In response, the Trump administration in February [announced](#) a new round of targeted tariffs on China’s synthetic drug supply chain, aiming to disrupt the production and export of fentanyl precursors.

**Sign up for the Morning Brief newsletter.** Join 200,000+ Canadians who receive truthful news without bias or agenda, investigative reporting that matters, and important stories other media ignore. [Sign up with 1-click >>](#)



**Tom Ozimek**

Reporter

Tom Ozimek is a senior reporter for The Epoch Times. He has a broad background in journalism, deposit insurance, marketing and communications, and adult education.



---

#### Author's Selected Articles

##### **Judge Orders Release of Georgetown Researcher Accused of Hamas Ties**

May 14, 2025



## Ford Recalls 274,000 SUVs Over Brake Line Defect That Could Impede Braking

May 14, 2025



## California Governor Moves to End Free Health Care for Illegal Immigrant Adults

May 14, 2025



## Microsoft Announces Mass Layoffs in Push to Streamline Operations

May 13, 2025



Copyright © 2000 - 2025 The Epoch Times Association Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Cookies Settings](#)