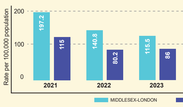
SUBSTANCE USE IN MIDDLESEX-LONDON:
HOW WE COMPARE TO ONTARIO

And where we should focus our gaze as leaders committed to community well-being.

Opioids Continue to Cause Health Harms

Like other jurisdictions, Middlesex-London is grappling with a significant crisis driven by the misuse of opioids. These substances have led to an alarming rate of emergency department (ED) visits, hospitalizations, and deaths.



Since peaking at 197.2 per 100,000 population in 2021, **the local rate of ED visits** has continued to decline, but was once again significantly higher than Ontario in 2025.

While the rate of **hospitalizations** for opioid poisonings was significantly higher in Middlesex-London than Ontario in 2021, when it peaked at 24 per 100,000 population, **local rates were comparable to Ontario through 2024, becoming significantly higher once again in 2025.**



The **death rate for opioid poisonings** was significantly higher in Middlesex-London than Ontario in 2021 and 2022, but was once again **comparable in 2023, 2024 and 2025**.

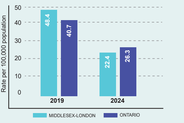
Who has the highest rate of opioid poisonings leading to ED visits and deaths?

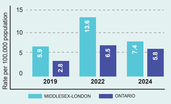
25-44 YRS

Methamphetamine Deaths on the Decline

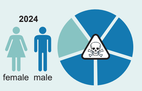
While communities across the province also face concerning rates of opioid and methamphetamine use, the number of deaths from methamphetamine poisonings was higher in Middlesex-London compared to Ontario between 2019 to 2023 but was comparable in 2024.

In 2024, the rate of **emergency department visits** for methamphetamine poisonings in Middlesex-London was comparable to Ontario. The local rate of 22.4 methamphetamine ED visits per 100,000 population was significantly lower compared to the rate from five years before (2019) and has been **showing signs of decline in recent years.**





Middlesex-London death rates for **methamphetamine poisonings** were significantly higher compared to Ontario from 2019 to 2023. For the first time since 2018, the death rate in 2024 was similar to Ontario. In 2024, the local death rate was 7.4 deaths per 100,000 population, which is significantly lower than the local 2022 rate.



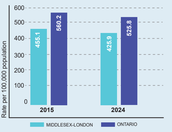
Who experiences more fatal methamphetamine deaths?
In 2024 the rate was more than three times higher among males than females at 11.4 deaths per 100,000 people.



Rates of deaths from methamphetamine poisonings in Middlesex-London from 2019 to 2022 were more than double compared to Ontario.

Alcohol Use Contributes to Both Negative Heath Consequences and Health System Burden

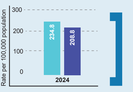
Contributing to the negative health impact of our misuse of opioids and methamphetamine, is our use of alcohol. The local rate of emergency department visits caused by alcohol exceeds those for opioid or methamphetamine use, and **our region faces a higher rate of hospitalizations related to alcohol compared to Ontario**.



Local ED visit rates for alcohol far exceed those for opioids or methamphetamines, and there were **more than 2,000 associated ED visits** among Middlesex-London residents in 2024.

The rate of **hospitalizations for conditions entirely caused by alcohol** was significantly higher in Middlesex-London compared to Ontario from 2015 to 2022. Rates were comparable in 2023, increasing again in 2024, with Middlesex-London significantly higher than Ontario once again.

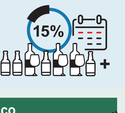






The rate of deaths for conditions entirely caused by alcohol in Middlesex-London was significantly lower than Ontario in 2024 and comparable from 2018 to 2023.

In 2019/2020, 15% of Middlesex-London adults 19+ self-reported consuming 7 or more drinks per week, putting them at increasingly high risk for negative health consequences.



About 2 in 10 Adults Still Smoke Commercial Tobacco

Daily commercial tobacco use and **current smoker status rates among individuals 19+ have remained relatively stable** for the region served by the Middlesex-London Health Unit, as they have across Ontario.



In Middlesex-London, **approximately 12% of adults reported daily smoking in 2019/2020**, which is comparable to Ontario.

Most youth 12-18 in Middlesex-London, as well as Ontario, **self-reported having never smoked commercial tobacco products**.



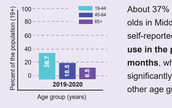


Where have you experienced second hand smoke exposure?

Our Cannabis Use Is Sending Us to Hospital

In 2023, rates of hospitalizations due to cannabis poisonings were similar for Middlesex-London and Ontario.

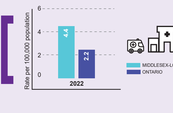




About 37% of 19-44 year olds in Middlesex-London self-reported **cannabis use in the past 12 months**, which was significantly higher than other age groups.

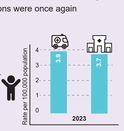


In 2019-2020, 7% of adults 19+ self reported daily cannabis use.



From 2013 to 2021, the Middlesex-London region was comparable to Ontario when it came to cannabis poisonings that resulted in hospitalization, but was **significantly higher in 2022, at 4.4 per 100,000 population**. In 2023, rates of cannabis poisonings that resulted in hospitalizations were once again comparable to Ontario.

In 2023, the rate of ED visits among children 12 and younger for cannabis-related poisonings was 3.9 per 100,000, and the hospitalization rate in this age group was 3.7 per 100,000.



Our Response:

The Middlesex-London Health Unit works with municipalities and community organizations on strategies to reduce substance related harms in our community. The Health Unit implements social marketing campaigns to increase knowledge and influence behaviour, enforces Smoke-Free Ontario legislation, provides harm reduction education and clean equipment to people who use substances to reduce their risk of harms and distributes Naloxone to prevent opioid deaths.

For more information about substance use in our region, visit our Substance Use Dashboard

BUREAU DE SANTÉ DE MIDDLESEX-LONDON
HEALTH UNIT
www.healthunit.com