



The Impact of Drug Use in Sarasota County: What the Data Show

Research has long shown that the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs is the single most serious health problem in the United States, straining the health care system, burdening the economy, and contributing to the health problems and death of millions of Americans every year. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly 17 percent of the U.S. population 18 years old and over will fulfill criteria for alcohol or drug or other substance abuse during their lifetimes.

Today, substance abuse causes more deaths, illnesses, and disabilities than any other preventable health condition.¹

When the effects on the families of abusers and people close to those injured or killed by intoxicated drivers are considered, such abuse impacts untold millions more.

Research shows tobacco use among adolescents, is a powerful predictor of other drug use, especially among females. For adolescent males, alcohol use is a strong predictor of progression into the use of other drugs. The age when adolescents first start using alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs is also a reliable predictor of later alcohol and drug problems, especially if that use begins before age 15. More than 40 percent of youth who start drinking at age 14 or younger develop alcohol dependence, compared with 10 percent of youth who begin drinking at age 20 or older.²

Quick Stats for Sarasota County

Adults who currently smoke ⁱ	19.6%
Adults who engage in binge drinking ⁱ	9.9%
Youth who currently smoke ⁱⁱ	11%
Youth consuming their first drink of alcohol by age 12 ⁱⁱ	30%
Youth who have used marijuana during their lifetime ⁱⁱ	16%
Youth who have used cocaine during their lifetime ⁱⁱ	6%
Youth who have used prescription drugs to get high ⁱⁱ	6%
Households reporting someone with an alcohol problem ⁱⁱⁱ	7%
Households reporting someone with a drug problem ⁱⁱⁱ	3%
Households in which someone with a drug or alcohol problem is getting treatment for the problem ⁱⁱⁱ	25%

ⁱ Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, 2002

ⁱⁱ Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Middle School Students), 2006

ⁱⁱⁱ CHIP Household Survey, 2006

Drug Use Among Sarasota County Youth

The Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey was administered to 561 Sarasota County students, in grades 6 through 12, in the spring of 2006.³ The results supply a valuable source of information to help reduce and prevent the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs by school aged use. The survey measures

not only the prevalence of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and delinquent behavior, but also the risk and protective factors related to these behaviors. Key findings from the report are listed below.

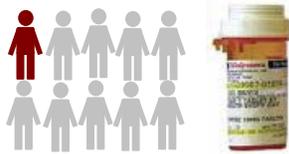
Key Findings from the Florida Substance Abuse Survey Sarasota County, 2006



With overall prevalence rates of 68.6% for lifetime and 45.9% for past-30-day use, **alcohol is the most commonly used drug among Sarasota County students.**



Current use of alcohol by Sarasota County students has increased. The percentage of students reporting past-30-day use of alcohol increased from 34.0% in 2000 to 45.9% in 2006. Similarly, the percentage of students reporting past-30-day use of marijuana increased from 14.3% in 2000 to 21.3% in 2006.



More than one student out of every 10 reported lifetime use of prescription pain relievers (10.1% lifetime and 3.6% past 30-day).

Sarasota County: **23%**



Florida: **15%**

Overall, in 2006, 39.8% of surveyed Sarasota County students reported at least one use of any illicit drug in their lifetimes, and 23.3% reported use in the past 30 days. The **use of any illicit drug in the past 30 days is notably higher in Sarasota County than across the State** (23.3% in Sarasota county versus 15% statewide).

Source: Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey

Deaths due to Unintentional Poisonings: Focus on Sarasota County

Nearly all poisoning deaths in the United States are attributed to drugs, and most drug poisonings result from the abuse of prescription and illegal drugs.

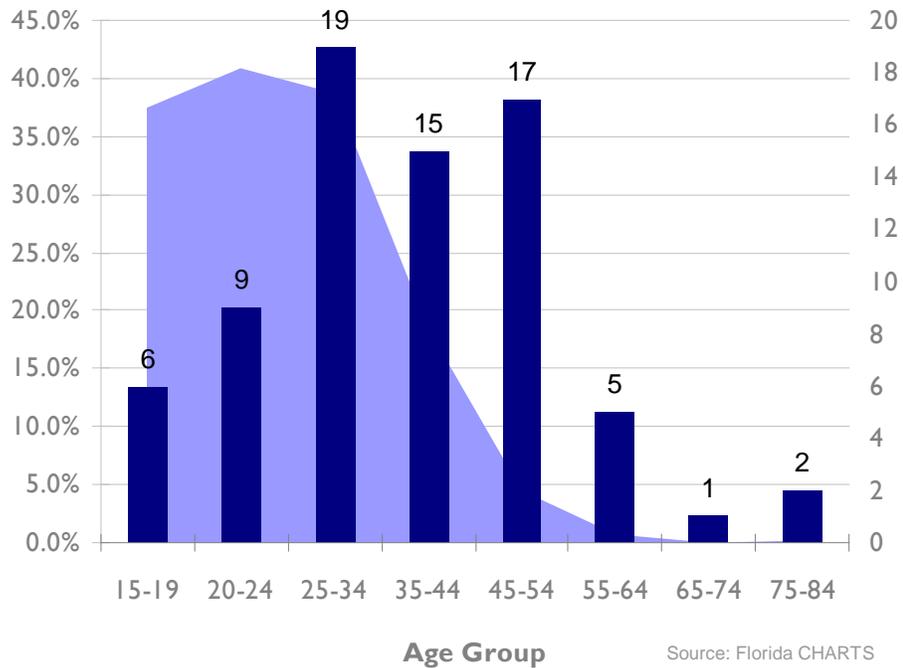
Poisonings are either intentional or unintentional. Intentional poisoning is the result of a person taking or giving a substance with the intention of causing harm. Suicide and assault by poisoning fall into this category. If the person taking or giving a substance did not mean to cause harm, then it is an unintentional poisoning. Unintentional poisoning includes the use of drugs or chemicals for recreational purposes in excessive amounts, such as an "overdose."

In recent years, in the United States, poisoning was second only to motor-vehicle crashes as a cause of death from unintentional injury in the United States.⁴ However, in 2006 in Sarasota County, more people died as a result of unintentional poisoning than by motor vehicle accidents.

Seventy-four Sarasota County residents died due to unintentional poisonings in 2006. Most of these deaths (19) occurred among people between the ages of 25-34. Drugs were responsible for about 40 percent of all deaths between the ages of 15-34.

Drug-Related Deaths, By Age Group

All Races, All Sexes, 1980 - 2006



The **light blue area** represents the proportion of deaths which were drug-related.

The **dark blue bars** represent the total number of deaths.

Source: Florida CHARTS

Over the years, the number of deaths attributed to unintentional poisonings has been on the rise. Whereas the 3-year death rate in Sarasota County was 1.2 deaths per 100,000 between 1980-1982, in the years between 2004-2006 the rate reached 22 deaths per 100,000. This rate is nearly double the State average, and among Florida Counties, Sarasota County had the third highest rate of unintentional poisoning deaths between 2004-2006.

Florida Counties with the Highest Unintentional Poisoning Death Rates, 2004-2006

Discrete 3-Year Rates for All Races & Sexes
Deaths per 100,000

Okeechobee	24.3
Pasco	22.1
Sarasota	22.0
Nassau	21.9
Walton	19.5
Pinellas	18.1

Source: Florida CHARTS

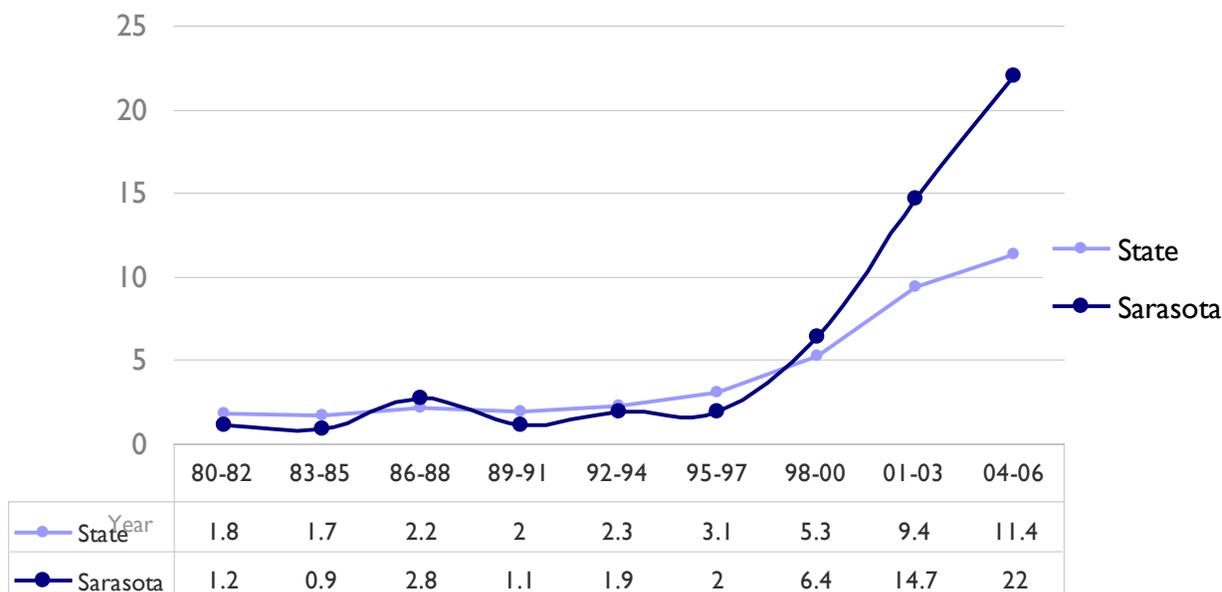
An **addiction** is a recurring compulsion by an individual to engage in some specific activity, despite harmful consequences to the individual's health, mental state or social life.

While lifestyle choices, environmental factors or heredity may influence its onset, **addiction is completely preventable.**

National Institute on Drug Abuse

Age-Adjusted Unintentional Poisoning Death Rate

Discrete 3-Year Rates, per 100,000
All Races, All Sexes, 1980 – 2006



Source: Florida CHARTS

Types of Drugs Contributing to Deaths: Report from Medical Examiners

In a report issued by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the State's Medical Examiners were asked to distinguish between the drugs as the "cause" of death versus those merely "present" in the body at the time of death.⁵ In Florida, in 2006, the drugs that cause the most deaths were cocaine (829), methadone (716), all benzodiazepines (553), oxycodone (496), alprazolam (456), ethyl alcohol (378), hydrocodone (236), and morphine (229). When alcohol is excluded, prescription

drugs account for 67% of all drug occurrences found in deceased persons.

In the combined counties of Sarasota, Manatee and DeSoto (Florida Medical Examiners District 12), cocaine was the drug most commonly found at lethal levels in deceased persons. Among those aged 18-25, alprazolam (Xanax) was most commonly found, followed by methadone and cocaine.

Drugs found at lethal levels in Deceased Persons Sarasota, DeSoto and Manatee Counties, 2006

Drug	Total Deaths	Age of Decedent				
		<18	18-25	26-34	35-50	>50
Cocaine	58	0	13	10	25	10
Methadone	53	1	14	16	15	7
Alprazolam (Xanax)	38	0	15	9	10	4
Oxycodone (OcyContin)	26	0	5	2	13	6
Diazepam (Valium)	14	0	1	2	9	2
Morphine	11	0	1	0	5	5
Hydrocodon	7	0	1	1	4	1
Propoxyphene (Darvon)	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement

¹ Roberts, D.F., Henricksen, C., and Christiansson, P.G. 1999. *Substance Use in Popular Movies and Music*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, and Office of National Drug Control Policy.

² *Ibid.*

³ 2006 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey – Sarasota County Report

⁴ CDC. 2007. Unintentional Poisoning Deaths --- United States, 1999–2004. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 56(05):93-96

⁵ Florida Department of Law Enforcement. "Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons by Florida Medical Examiners 2006 Report". Available at www.fdle.state.fl.us/cjst/mecMECPublications.html