

Statistics: Number of overdose related deaths in Tennessee before and after kratom was banned.

Tennessee House Bill 12 was signed by TN governor Bill Haslam in 2013. This bill effectively made kratom illegal to knowingly produce, manufacture, distribute, sell, offer for sale or possess. This bill went into effect on July 1st, 2013.

Number of overdose deaths in TN from 2011-2015:

2011: 1,062

2012: 1,094

2013: 1,166

2014: 1,263

2015: 1,451 (This is the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in TN state history)

Breaking down the numbers we see:

3% increase in OD deaths from 2011 to 2012.

6% increase in OD deaths from 2012 to 2013.

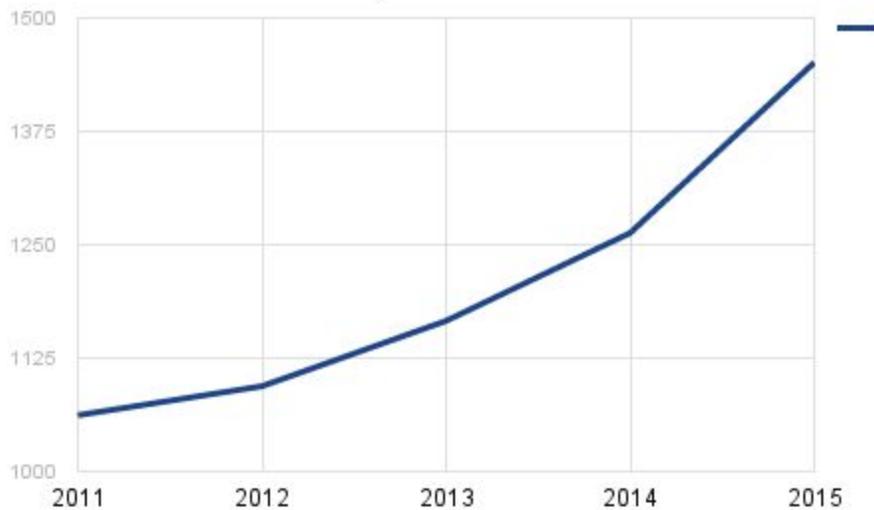
8% increase in OD deaths from 2013 to 2014.

15% increase in OD deaths from 2014 to 2015.

There is an OD death increase of 24% from 2013 to 2015.

Source of statistical info: [The Tennessean](#)

**Number of overdose deaths in TN 2011-2015.
Kratom banned July 1st, 2013.**



Overdose deaths have continued to go up each year and have now surpassed the number of annual motor vehicle accident deaths. The overdose rate is now 22 people in 100,000 as opposed to 14.7 people in 100,000 for motor vehicle accidents. Although no direct correlation can definitively be made between increased overdose deaths and the banning of kratom, the numbers suggest that this move was completely ineffective at helping with the problem. Furthermore, keeping kratom legal could have helped numerous individuals who were addicted to drugs. There are many thousands of anecdotal reports from individuals saying that kratom saved their life, and saved them from the horrors of opioid withdrawal, alcoholism, and other drug addictions. TN Department of Health data shows that 72% of the 1,451 OD deaths in 2015 were opioid related. Of those opioid related deaths 30% were confirmed to have included a combination of benzodiazepines and opioids, a particularly deadly combination. These numbers likely underestimate the true burden of opioid-related overdose deaths given the fact that many death certificates do not list the drug responsible for the overdose. Approximately 1 in 5 overdose deaths certificates do not specify which drug was responsible, while others show multiple drugs present in the victim's system, making it difficult to determine which drug was responsible.

Quote: "This is a massive, alarming and ongoing rate of preventable death that stays too much in the shadows," Department of Safety and Homeland Security Commissioner David W. Purkey said. "Our state is struggling with overdose deaths, and we realize the urgency of working even closer with our colleagues on education and treatment in an effort to stop this epidemic. I urge our citizens to be careful and mindful about the risks associated with these dangerous drugs. We've got to stop this alarming fatality trend. I'll continue to work with Dr. Dreyzehner, TBI

Director Mark Gwyn and Commissioner Marie Williams on strategies to overcome these shocking deaths.”

Clearly more education is needed on the nature and benefits of kratom. Many people have changed their lives with the help of this beneficial supplement. It needs to be made available to the people of TN who are dying in epidemic numbers. For every one person who dies of an opioid-related overdose in TN there are 851 people who are in various stages of misuse, abuse or treatment. ***That's 1 in 6 Tennesseans***. TN has the second highest rate of opioid prescriptions per person, behind only West Virginia.

-Melanie Victor