



Death and Drugging in
FLORIDA

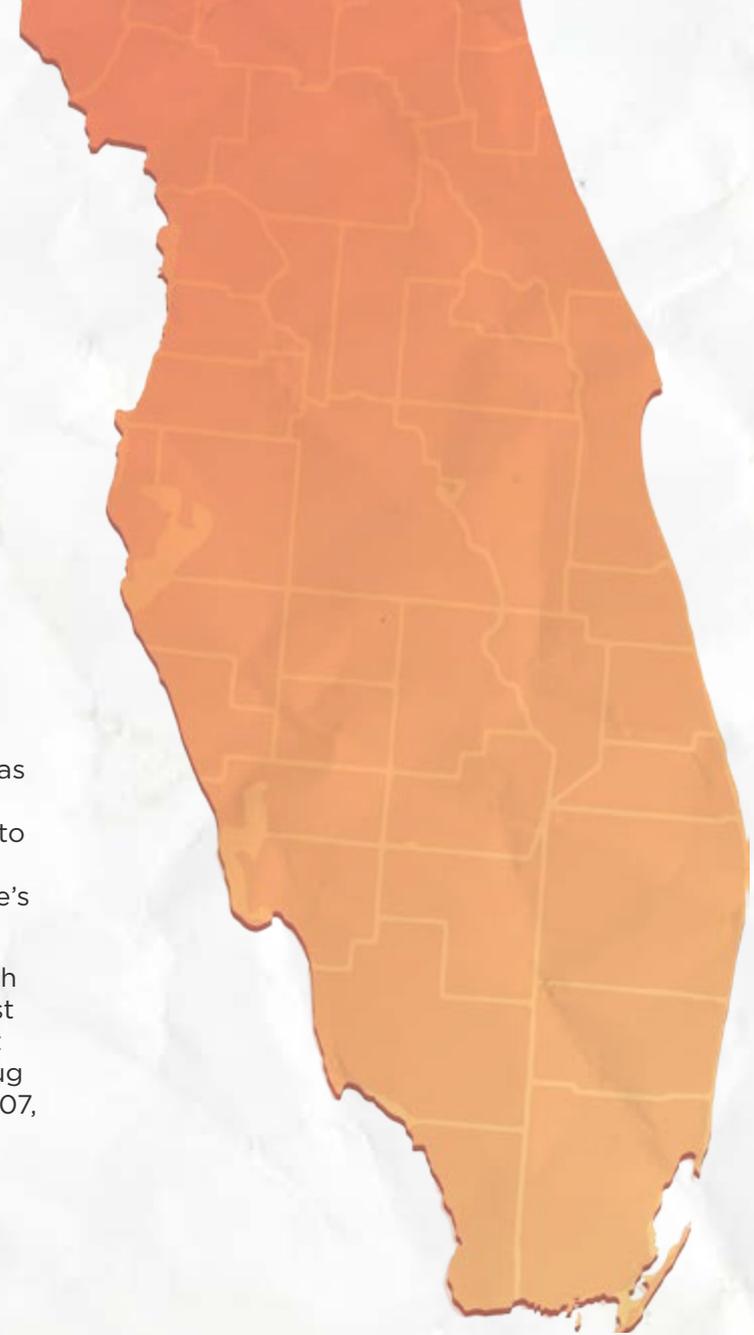
POPULAR DRUGS IN FLORIDA: Alcohol, Cocaine & Prescription Painkillers

While alcohol is the most commonly abused substance in Florida, due to the state's prime location near South and Central America, Florida is hotbed for narcotics trafficking – leading to high rates of abuse for both cocaine and heroin. Prescription drug abuse is also a growing problem. By 2010, Florida had become the leading “Pill Mill” state, due to the high levels of prescription drug abuse. The state is also notorious for its club drug-fuelled party scene; Florida made headlines in 2012 for the state's notorious “bath salt” zombie killer attack.

COCAINE IS THE MOST FREQUENTLY ABUSED DRUG IN FLORIDA, FOLLOWED BY MARIJUANA

From 2005 to 2006, 390,000 Floridians report using cocaine. The state has a long history of cocaine smuggling, dating back to the 1970s and 1980s when Columbian drug cartel kingpins like Pablo Escobar turned Florida into the United State's cocaine smuggling capital. By the 1980s, cocaine abuse was also rampant across the state of Florida, and continues to be the state's biggest drug problem today.

While Florida is also a major state for heroin trafficking, in comparison with other states, Florida does not have a major heroin abuse problem. The vast majority of heroin that enters Florida is not used within the state; rather, it is trafficked to other states for use. Marijuana is also a commonly used drug and marijuana abuse is a leading reason for seeking drug treatment. In 2007, 24,812 Florida residents were admitted to drug treatment facilities due to marijuana use.



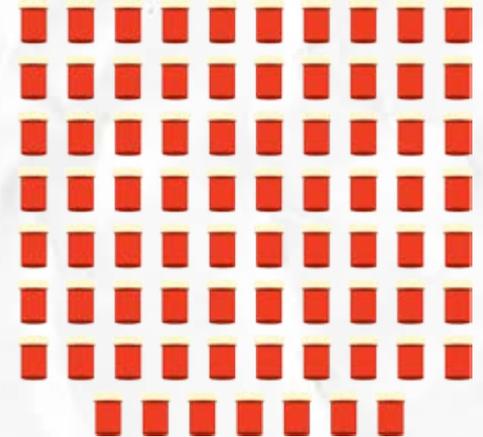
CLUB DRUGS LIKE ECSTASY CONTINUE TO BE POPULAR

MDMA (ecstasy) is also found throughout Florida, especially in conjunction with the Miami nightclub party scene. In 2006, 67 deaths occurred because of MDMA; four deaths were related to the party drug GHB. Meth is also found in all of Florida's 67 counties. To combat the state's growing problem of meth abuse, police are actively working to shut down meth labs. The number of meth lab seizures increased by 148% from 2007 to 2009, growing from 128 lab seizures to 318 seizures, respectively.

“UNPRECEDENTED LEVELS OF PAINKILLER ABUSE” PLAGUE FLORIDA

From 2005 to 2006, 777,000 citizens in Florida reported using prescription drugs for non-medical purposes. According to the Florida Medical Examiner, five people die each day as a direct result of prescription drug abuse. In 2006, 731 deaths were caused by hydrocodone abuse, and this death toll has only increased over the last five years. Hydrocodone, a synthetic opioid derived from codeine, is known commercially as Vicodin. It is one of the most deadly prescription painkillers currently available today. Doctors in Florida prescribe ten times more oxycodone pills than doctors in every other state combined. The ready availability of prescription painkillers fuels addiction and makes it more difficult for individuals to stop abusing these pills and successfully maintain sobriety.

Thousands of powerful narcotics are dispensed each day through “pill mills”, so-called pain clinics that exist only to sell large quantities of prescription painkillers through unethical practices, rather than actually helping individuals manage pain. According to the Fort Lauderdale Sheriff's department, there are more pill mills than McDonalds in Ft. Lauderdale - turning the city into a destination not only for spring breakers, but also for drug traffickers and individuals who are addicted to prescription painkillers.



777,000

Floridians have used prescription drugs for non-medical purposes.

“BATH SALTS” ARE LATEST DRUG CRAZE TO HIT FLORIDA

Florida made headlines in 2012 when a man who was allegedly high on bath salts attacked a homeless man and chewed off 75% part of his face in a fit of zombie-like cannibalism. While investigators later found that marijuana, not bath salts, was responsible for the attack, according to CNN, the high-profile new coverage did bring attention to the growing problems associated with bath salt abuse. While bath salt abuse is not widespread, because of the Miami nightclub scene, individuals in Florida are more likely to be exposed to new club party drugs, like bath salts, which are also increasingly more dangerous. “Bath salts” are the street name for a family of designer drugs created from synthetic cathionenes, which is similar to cocaine and amphetamines, and affects the body by stimulating the central nervous system. Individuals who abuse bath salts are at increased risk for heart attack, brain swelling, coma and death. Bath salts also cause extreme paranoia, hallucinations and erratic behavior, which is why they were originally blamed for the “zombie attack” in 2012.



FLORIDA DRUG LAWS & TRENDS

FLORIDA IS HOME TO THE THIRD OLDEST DRUG COURT PROGRAM IN THE UNITED STATES

Florida's drug court, which began in the early 1990's, included 92 drug courts as of 2007. Nearly half of all drug court cases (45%) involve powdered cocaine. According to police records, there were 155,246 adult drug arrests made within Florida in 2007. During the same year, there were an additional 2,590 DEA Florida arrests. However, some legal observers say that the current level of enforcement is simply not enough to keep up with growing drug problems, including pill mills, new club drugs (e.g.. bath salts) and meth labs.

“THE OXYEXPRESS”: LACK OF PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLER REGULATION FUELING PILL MILLS

Unlike most states, Florida lacks a universal system for monitoring drug prescriptions. This makes it easier for individuals who are addicted to painkillers to “doctor shop” and bounce from one pill mill to another. Because of the growing number of pill mills - most of which are found in strip malls - investigators and law enforcement agents unofficially nicknamed Florida's Interstate 75 the “Oxy Express”.

In 2011, Florida legislators tried to pass legislation to create a statewide prescription drug database. Governor Rick Scott, however, came out against the legislation citing privacy concerns. While Florida law enforcement agents continue to do their best to crack down on pill mills, officials say that a statewide drug database, along with other regulations, are necessary to help stem the tide of prescription painkillers.



Doctors in Florida prescribe **10 TIMES MORE** Oxycodone than doctors in every other state combined.

CRACKING DOWN ON DRUG TRAFFICKING OFF FLORIDA'S COASTS

As part of joint efforts between the DEA and Coast Guard, Florida is stepping up its efforts to stem the flow of drugs into the United States through the state's lengthy coastline. In July 2013, the Coast Guard intercepted an estimated \$35 million dollars worth of cocaine. The total haul - 2300 pounds - is one of the state's largest drug busts. Thanks to increased pressure from law enforcement officials, drug smugglers are being forced to alter routes and change drop dates in an effort to elude capture. However, as the recent bust shows, law enforcement officials are increasingly confident that they are catching up with drug smugglers and significantly cracking down on cocaine trafficking.

DRUG TESTING IN THE FLORIDA WORKPLACE

Under Florida state law, employers who establish a drug-free workplace (and enforce the drug-free workplace rule with drug testing) are eligible for a discount on their worker's compensation insurance premiums. Florida employers with a drug free workplace are required to drug test job applicants. According to Florida law, employers with a drug free workplace are also able to drug test employees in the following situations:

- Reasonable suspicion of drug use (e.g., erratic or abnormal behavior) or reported drug use
- Part of a routinely scheduled medical fitness exam
- After an employee returns to work following drug rehabilitation due to a positive drug test



ADVANTAGES OF TREATMENT IN FLORIDA

While Florida's 8,000 miles of coastline have made the state a top location for drug trafficking, this pristine coastline is also the ideal location for drug treatment facilities. This peaceful, tranquil setting helps individuals leave their problems behind at home and start rebuilding their lives through treatment. Consequently, Florida is home to numerous drug treatment facilities along the coast. As of 2006, 228 drug treatment facilities in Florida offer residential, inpatient care programs.

FLORIDA DRUG TREATMENT ADMISSION STATISTICS

In 2009, there were 79,322 admissions to alcohol and drug rehabilitation centers in Florida, according to statistics from the federal government's lead agency on substance abuse, SAMHSA. Nearly two-thirds of individuals admitted to rehab were male (61.1%) and one-third (38.3%) of admitted individuals were female.



ADMISSIONS to Florida drug and alcohol rehab centers in 2009

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING FLORIDA DRUG REHAB

With more than 220 inpatient treatment centers, Florida offers a number of different types of substance abuse treatments. Most inpatient treatment centers include supervised medical detox. This is especially important for individuals who are addicted to drugs such as meth, heroin and certain prescription painkillers. While detoxing from any drug can be difficult, the withdrawal symptoms associated with these drugs are not only painful, but without proper care, individuals who attempt withdrawal cold turkey may even jeopardize their lives. Consequently, most drug treatment facilities do not recommend detoxing “cold turkey” without medical care. Individuals who are struggling to quit are more likely to succeed – and survive the withdrawal symptoms – when they are in the care of experienced, trained professionals.

Most drug rehab centers offer a 12-step program to help individuals accept their addiction and take the necessary steps forward to manage this addiction. In addition to traditional 12-step programs, some residential treatment centers may include holistic treatments, group therapy, and one-on-one cognitive behavioral therapy. Holistic treatment options may include yoga, meditation, massage therapy, equine therapy, art therapy or other types of therapy that help build self-esteem and support an individual’s personal well being. These therapies strengthen the mind-body connection and help individuals learn how to find pleasure in life again outside of drugs. Thanks to Florida’s year-round good weather, individuals who are in Florida rehab centers also have more opportunities for outdoor activities.

Because of the wide variety of different Florida treatment centers, individuals are more likely to find a program that matches their personal needs or their loved one’s needs. While most centers provide treatment for both drug and alcohol abuse, some rehab centers may be better equipped to treat certain types of drug problems or alcohol problems. If your loved one could benefit from attending rehab, one way that you can help is by researching different Florida treatment programs and finding the one that is best tailored to your loved one’s needs.



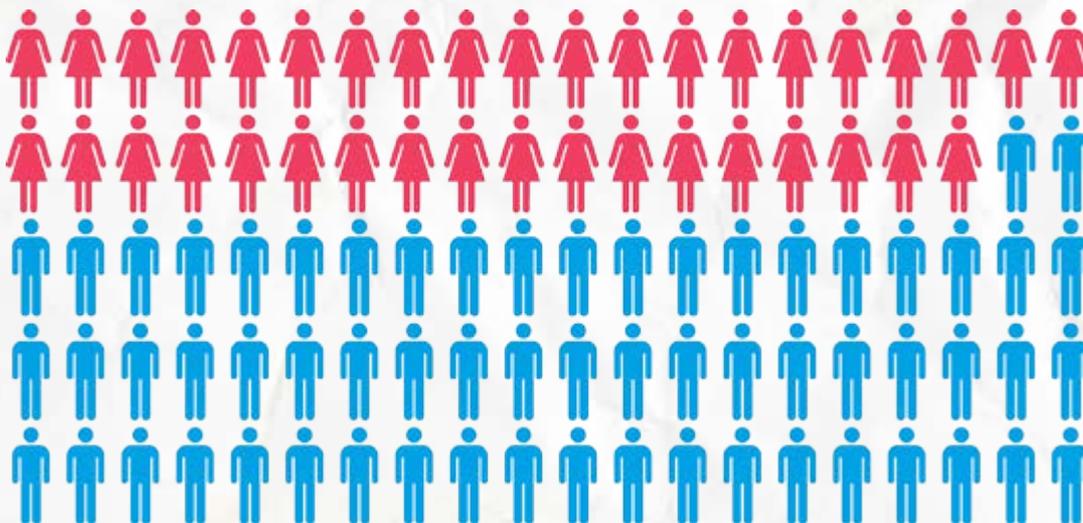
HOW FLORIDA DRUG TREATMENT CENTERS PREVENT RELAPSE

One of the biggest challenges that individuals face upon completing rehab is the temptation to begin using again. In order to reduce the risk for relapse, some Florida drug rehab programs may include life skill course or offer post-rehab care programs to monitor participants' success. The goal of these programs is to not only teach individuals the coping skills necessary to say no to future drug use, but also to educate and empower individuals to take control of their lives. When selecting a rehab program, relapse prevention measures are an important element that should be carefully considered.

Thanks to Florida's wide selection of different treatment programs, however, it is much easier to find a rehab program in Florida with a strong, proactive emphasis on relapse prevention.

REHABILITATION CENTERS CONSIST OF:

38%
FEMALE



62%
MALE