

# ER visits by teens in mental health crisis have declined: CDC

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There's a glimmer of good news when it comes to the mental health of

America's adolescents: Visits to U.S. emergency departments for psychiatric troubles declined among kids aged 12 to 17 by the fall of 2022, compared to a year prior.

Overall, mean weekly adolescent emergency department (ED) visits for [mental health conditions](#) fell by 11% last fall, compared to higher levels in the fall of 2021, when the pandemic was still keeping many kids out of school and in lockdown at home.

According to data compiled by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, similar year-on-year declines were also seen for adolescent ED visits linked to thoughts of suicide (down 12%) and [drug overdoses](#) (down 10%).

Why the improvement in teens' mental health?

"Many adolescents have returned to prepandemic-like school and community environments, which might have improved [social engagement](#), reduced isolation and supported mental and behavioral health," wrote a team led by CDC investigator Kayla Anderson.

The researchers also believe that "familial stressors" might also have ebbed as kids were released from lockdowns and remote schooling.

The report wasn't all good news, however.

Boys seem to be benefiting more than girls, the researchers noted, and ED visits for mental health conditions "remain similar to or higher than already concerningly high prepandemic baselines among females into 2022," the team reported.

There was also one more grim statistic: A rise between 2021 and 2022 of opioid-related overdoses, especially among boys.

Between the fall of 2021 and the fall of 2022, ED visits for such crises shot up 41% among male adolescents and 10% among females, the report found.

And ED visits involving any kind of drug overdose were still 10% higher in the fall of 2022 than they were in 2019, Anderson's team noted.

They stressed that, compared with adults, the absolute number of teen opioid overdoses remains small.

"Still, any [adolescent](#) overdose is concerning," the CDC team wrote, "particularly as increased availability of highly potent and lethal counterfeit pills containing illicitly manufactured fentanyl among [adolescents](#) via [social media platforms](#) has heightened awareness recently about increasing overdose risk among younger populations."

More needs to be done to help troubled teens avoid mental health crises and drug overdose in particular, they added. Two recent efforts may already be paying off: The launch of the 988 suicide crisis line in 2022 and better access to telehealth [mental health services](#) "might have improved families' ability to identify support before a crisis or get care outside EDs," Anderson's team said.

The new statistics were sourced from the National Syndromic Surveillance Program federal database. The study was published in the May 12 issue of the CDC's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#).

**More information:** Find out more about the crisis in adolescent mental health at the [Office of the U.S. Surgeon General](#).

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