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316 million people use drugs – UN calls it a "vicious cycle"

The number of drug users is growing faster than the world's population. Criminals are exploiting the global instability and contributing to it, UN experts warn. This is currently booming.

According to a UN report, the number of drug users worldwide has risen to 316 million. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna also pointed out in its latest World Drug Report that criminal groups are exploiting and exacerbating the instability in many regions.



The number of drug users and most other figures in the report refer to 2023 – these are the most recent figures for a global assessment of the situation. For 2022, experts still estimated 292 million drug users worldwide. It would be difficult to determine an exact figure for all regions anyway.

Cannabis was by far the most widely used drug in 2023, with 244 million users, followed by opiates (61 million), amphetamines (30.7 million), cocaine (25 million), and ecstasy (21 million).

The UN speaks of a "vicious circle"

The number of people using drugs — apart from alcohol or tobacco — has increased by 28 percent within a decade. Consumption is thus growing faster than the global population, explained UNODC Chief Ghada Waly on the International Day against Drug Abuse. Currently, both growing demand and growing supply are being observed, she wrote in the report. "This fuels global instability and further fuels this instability — a vicious circle."

Cocaine production at record levels

Of all drugs, the cocaine market is growing the fastest, the annual report stated. Illegal cocaine production increased by more than a third year-on-year in 2023, reaching a record volume of 3,708 tons. The number of users rose from 17 million to 25 million between 2013 and 2023.

According to UN experts, the cocaine boom is not only leading to more drug-related deaths, but also to increased violence between rival criminal organizations involved in drug smuggling. This can also be observed in Western and Central Europe, they said. More cocaine has been seized in these two regions than in North America for several years.



The destabilizing effect of the white stimulant is even more pronounced elsewhere. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime, for example, reported a dramatic increase in the murder rate in Ecuador and increasing gang violence in the Caribbean.

Drugs in War Zones

UN drug experts are also monitoring former and current war zones with concern. In Syria, the export and import of the synthetic drug Captagon persists. In Ukraine, the production and trade of synthetic drugs has increased during the war.

64 million addicts

The UN Office estimates that 64 million people will be addicted to drugs by 2023 – an increase of 13 percent within ten years.



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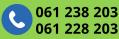
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Health Series - Calendar: All 40 Weeks of Pregnancy - week 20

You're halfway there, congratulations! You may already feel your baby's first movements.

Weeks 20 of Pregnancy

Baby's Development

Around the 20th week, a very special moment finally arrives for many women who are pregnant for the first time: They feel their baby moving in their belly. While your little one may only tickle you gently at first, it will become increasingly noticeable over time.

"If a pregnant woman doesn't feel anything yet, that's no cause for concern," says Dr. Anke Diemert, who leads the PRINCE (Prenatal Identification of Children's Health) study on prenatal imprinting. "The reason could simply be that the placenta is located at the front of the uterus." Then it could take until the 22nd or 23rd week before the woman can feel the first movements.

"It also depends on the pregnant woman's sensitivity," says Diemert. "It varies greatly from woman to woman." Most of the day, the baby doesn't do much fidgeting anyway: It now sleeps about 20 hours a day. "But it can certainly be active during sleep phases," says Diemert.

The placenta has now reached its final thickness of about two to four centimeters. Its diameter is about ten centimeters. The baby's arms and legs are slowly taking on their final proportions. If you're expecting a girl, her uterus is already fully developed. The vagina has also now formed. However,





the unborn child's external genitalia have not yet reached their final shape. In girls, the clitoris is still relatively large and protrudes from the labia.

The baby is now halfway through its growth: In the 20th week, fetuses weigh an average of about 330 grams and are approximately 25 centimeters long. In the second half of pregnancy, they then average twice as long and about ten times as heavy.

The mother's health

Halfway through! You're now halfway through your pregnancy. The second trimester of pregnancy is the best time for a relaxing vacation: Initial discomforts have usually subsided, but the baby bump isn't yet putting too much strain on you. Furthermore, if you don't have children yet, you can truly enjoy time alone with your partner, away from the daily grind. This is assuming the pregnancy is progressing smoothly and your doctor has no objections. You should also avoid exotic vacation destinations with poor hygiene and inadequate medical care, as well as malaria-prone areas.

Tip: Flying During Pregnancy

Flying is possible during the second trimester, provided there are no medical reasons against it. However, there are a few things you should keep in mind:

Wear compression stockings during the flight. They relieve pressure on your veins.

Make sure you get an aisle seat near the restroom when checking in.

Make sure you drink plenty of fluids. Still mineral water or tea is best.

Get up regularly and walk up and down the aisle a bit.

Please note:

Some airlines stop accepting pregnant women from the 28th week of pregnancy, others from the 34th or 36th week. Some require a doctor's or midwife's certificate. Check with your airline. Some countries also have special entry requirements for pregnant women.







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Health & Safety - Uninvited Guests: Managing Wildlife Risks in the Workplace

Wildlife hazards in the workplace are rare but real. Planning and training can make all the difference.

One day, I received a call from warehouse workers that completely stumped me. A snake had slithered into the facility overnight, and they were asking what to do. If you ask most EHS managers about workplace risks, wildlife will likely be the last thing they mention. However, I've dealt with snakes, raccoons, nesting seagulls attacking employees, and even a worker who caused a traffic accident while trying to avoid a squirrel. A giant spider once crawled out of a shipment of spare parts from another country, and I've read reports of employees being stung by wild bees.

While industrial workplaces are primarily associated with technological hazards, no company is entirely immune to uninvited guests—especially in rural areas.

Wildlife-related workplace injuries are more common than many realize. A study published in the American Journal of Industrial Medicine found that between 2015 and 2021, OSHA recorded 788 severe injuries caused by animals. Most incidents—60.4%—involved mammals, followed by insects, arachnids, and mites (23.2%) and reptiles (16.1%).

Wild animals can carry diseases such as rabies, Lyme disease, hantavirus, leptospirosis, and histoplasmosis. Some of these can be severe or even deadly if untreated. Even animals that seem harmless can trigger allergies. Exposure to fur, feathers, or dried droppings can make breathing difficult and cause severe reactions.



Understanding potential wildlife hazards is the first step in prevention. The best way to start is by identifying the animals common in your region.

Check official resources. Your county website or state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will have useful wildlife information.

Review national guidelines(Ministry of Tourism & Environment), which provides safety recommendations for dealing with wildlife, including venomous animals and insects.



Conduct a site risk assessment. Walk through your facility to identify potential entry points, nesting areas, and food sources that could attract animals.

Understanding the risks is just the first step—preparation is essential. For workplaces with outdoor operations, such as construction, quarrying, or agriculture, taking proactive measures can help prevent wildlife-related incidents.

In areas with a high risk of snake encounters, workers should wear high boots. According to OSHA, boots must be at least 10 inches tall for proper protection. Notify new contractors about this requirement before signing the contract, as it may add extra costs.

In this same guide, it is stated that to avoid insect stings, workers should wear long pants, socks, and long-sleeved shirts.

For individuals with hypersensitivity to bee venom, just one or two stings—from a bee can be enough to trigger fatal anaphylaxis. Even individuals without known allergies may suffer fatal outcomes if exposed to a large amount of venom. High doses can severely affect internal organs, especially the kidneys.

The appearance of allergic symptoms followed by signs of anaphylaxis after a bee sting requires immediate hospitalization.

To mitigate risks, workers who are aware of their hypersensitivity should carry a prescribed epinephrine auto-injector and inform coworkers in advance so they can assist in an emergency. Unfortunately, many individuals are unaware of their allergy.

Emergency medical supplies should be readily available, especially in remote locations. A well-stocked first-aid kit is essential, and in areas with venomous snakes or bee nests, keeping antivenom and antidotes (such as epinephrine) on hand may be necessary. However, their use is governed by prescription laws and state-specific regulations. Employers who choose to stock and administer epinephrine must ensure compliance with these rules and provide appropriate training. If you do not have trained and





authorized staff for such cases, it is strongly recommended to identify in advance the nearest location where emergency treatment, including epinephrine, is available before beginning work in areas where stinging insects may be present.



Employee training is just as important. Safety briefings should include guidance on wildlife awareness and avoidance techniques. Workers should be encouraged to watch where they step, make noise while moving to give animals time to retreat, and remain still if they encounter wildlife, as sudden movements may trigger an attack. Recognizing signs of aggressive or territorial behavior can also help prevent dangerous encounters.

Even indoor facilities are not immune to unexpected wildlife intrusions—I learned this firsthand when a snake found its way into my warehouse. That experience underscored the importance of having a solid plan in place.

To minimize wildlife encounters, employers should implement effective preventive measures. Regularly mowing the grass around buildings eliminates potential hiding spots, while deterrents such as barriers, fences, and sound devices help keep animals away from high-risk areas.

When selecting sound devices, consider their species-specific effectiveness. Ultrasonic devices can deter rodents but are generally ineffective against birds and larger mammals, while specialized ultrasonic devices can be effective for bats. High-pitched sound emitters may help repel birds, though their success varies by species. Some sound devices can repel snakes, but their effectiveness is inconsistent, and snakes may adapt over time. Wildlife can also adjust to these devices, reducing their effectiveness. Additionally, non-target species may be impacted, and regulations may limit the use of such devices. For optimal results, businesses should consult wildlife management professionals and adopt a multi-layered approach that includes habitat modification and physical barriers.

Moreover, securing workspaces by keeping doors closed, repairing structural gaps, and installing wildlife-proof screens further reduces the likelihood of animal intrusion.

Preparation is key. Employers should establish clear protocols for handling



wildlife encounters. In my example with the snake, we weren't prepared. It took us two hours to find someone who could remove it, and during that time, the warehouse stood idle, causing unnecessary downtime. It is crucial to know who to call in advance—contact local animal control services to confirm the types of animals they handle, their hours of operation, response times, and availability for emergency or weekend services.

Companies may choose to designate employees with certified animal handling skills to manage minor incidents, provided they receive proper training and equipment, or they may opt to find a local provider.

Additionally, companies should develop a detailed response protocol outlining the

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steps employees must take when encountering wildlife, including who to notify and how to safely exit the area. Emergency contact lists for pest control, animal rescue services, and local wildlife authorities should also be posted in visible locations.

In the case of bats, once captured, they should not be released. People can be bitten without realizing it, and even minor bites can pose serious health risks. The captured bat should be sent to a health department laboratory for testing to determine if rabies shots are necessary. If testing is not possible, doctors typically recommend the vaccine as a precaution.

If bats are frequently encountered in the workplace, it is advisable to keep protective gloves and small containers on





hand for safe capture. Additionally, ensure that the contact information for the nearest laboratory is posted in a visible location for quick access in case of an incident.

Beyond immediate response measures, companies must also establish long-term wildlife management policies. Feeding wild or stray animals should be strictly prohibited, as habituated animals may become territorial and aggressive.

To prevent attracting wildlife, garbage bins should be securely closed, and any unowned animals found on company property must be reported immediately. Maintaining this policy requires regular inspections to identify signs of animal activity, such as droppings, nests, or gnawed materials. Finally, businesses should implement wildlife awareness training for new employees and schedule refresher courses for existing staff to reinforce best practices.

By taking proactive steps and integrating prevention, response, and education, companies can effectively mitigate wildlife-related risks and ensure a safer work environment.

Wildlife encounters in the workplace may be uncommon, but they can disrupt operations and pose serious risks. By planning ahead and educating employees, you can minimize these hazards and ensure workplace safety whether you're dealing with snakes, bees, or even an overenthusiastic squirrel.





Fun Time - Joke of the week



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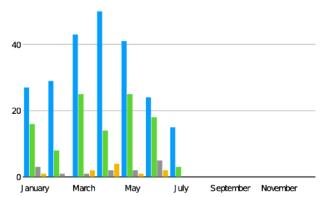
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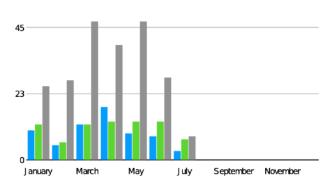
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	Medical	Trauma	Maternity	Paediatric	Level of Care: Advanced	Level of Care: Intermediate	Level of Care: Basic
January	27	16	3	1	10	12	25
February	29	8	1	0	5	6	27
March	43	25	1	2	12	12	47
April	50	14	2	4	18	13	39
May	41	25	2	1	9	13	47
June	24	18	5	2	8	13	28
July	15	3	0	0	3	7	8
August							
September							
October							
November							
December							
Total per annum Total	229 362	109	14	10	65 362	76	221
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Where is the emergency?

What happened?

What kind of injuries?

How many injured person

Waiting for further question

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E.M.A. Rescue Service 9112

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Windhoek 061-21 1111

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NamPol 10 111

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