# Drug Checking in Interior Health

Key Findings

- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the region (38%, 21 of 55 samples) fell slightly from last month, but trends may be hard to infer due to the small number of samples over a large region. Etizolam, the predominant benzodiazepine in expected opioids, may be missed by drug checking technologies. This means that the true rate may be higher than reported here.

- 1 sample of MDMA purchased in Cranbrook was actually *down* containing fentanyl. Many drugs look alike—drug checking can help you confirm what you think you have.

- Drug checking is available in many different communities in the Interior Health region. For updated times and locations, visit our **website**.

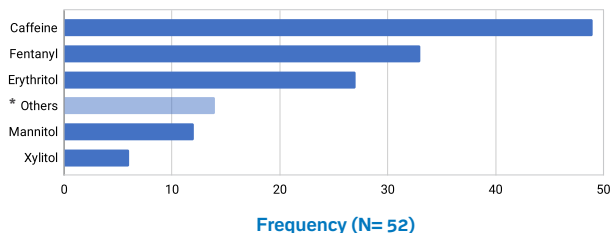## Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months
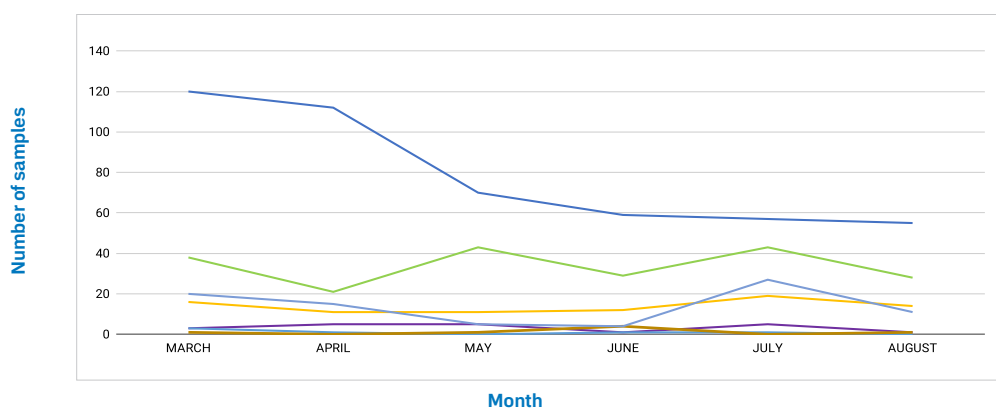
Number of samples by drug category in August

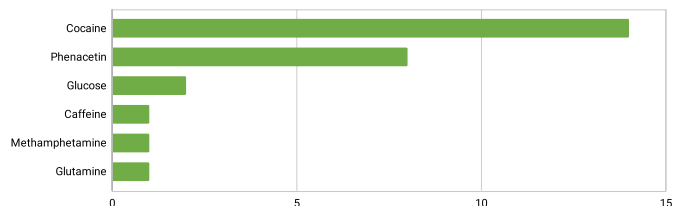|		
Opioid	55
Stimulant	28
Depressant	1
Psychedelic	14
Other	0
Polysubstance	1
Unknown	11

TOTAL: 110

Components found in drug samples in August
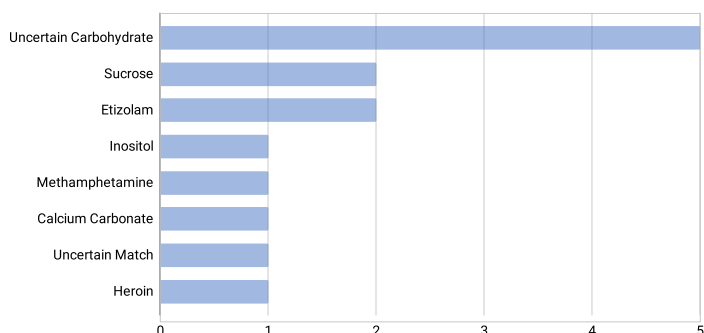
Components in opioids
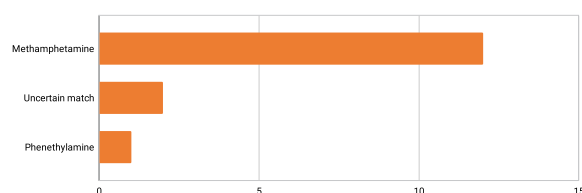

Frequency (N= 52)

Components in cocaine

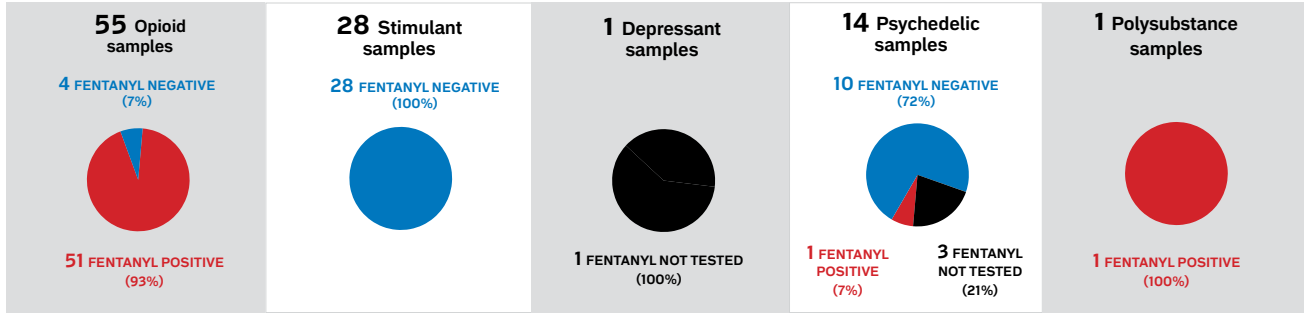Frequency (N=15)

*Other components found in opioids

Frequency (N= 52)

Components in methamphetamine

Frequency (N= 12)

www.drugcheckingbc.ca

Number of samples tested with **fentanyl present**

55 Opioid samples

4 FENTANYL NEGATIVE (7%)

51 FENTANYL POSITIVE (93%)

28 Stimulant samples

28 FENTANYL NEGATIVE (100%)

1 Depressant samples

1 FENTANYL NOT TESTED (100%)

14 Psychedelic samples

10 FENTANYL NEGATIVE (72%)

1 FENTANYL POSITIVE (7%)

3 FENTANYL NOT TESTED (21%)

1 Polysubstance samples

1 FENTANYL POSITIVE (100%)

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
No alerts from Interior Health partners this month					

For information about public health alerts in the Interior Health region, please visit:
https://www.interiorhealth.ca/AboutUs/Leadership/MHO/Pages/PHEmergency.aspx

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the past 6 months

Benzodiazepine-positivity

- MARCH: 34.8%
- APRIL: 50.5%
- MAY: 51.4%
- JUNE: 37.3%
- JULY: 43.9%
- AUGUST: 38.2%
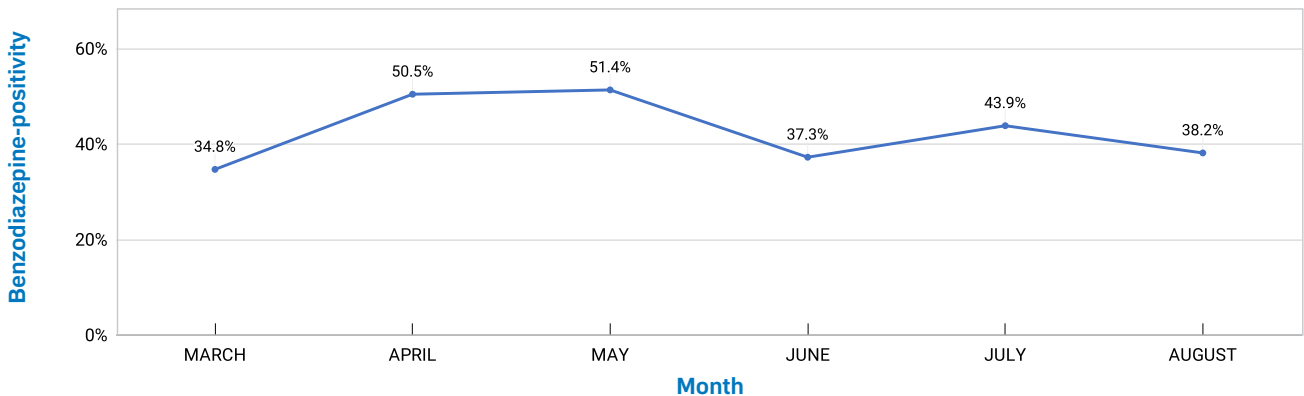
Month

During the month of August, **38.2%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Interior Health **(21 samples of 55 checked)**. Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here are derived from both of these technologies and are presumptive until confirmed by a laboratory.

Number of drugs checks at each site

Organization	City/Town	# of Drugs Checked
ANKORS	Cranbrook	9
	Nelson	11
ASK Wellness	Kamloops	15
	Merritt	7
	Penticton	21
UBC Okanagan HaRT	Kelowna	10
	Penticton	9
	Vernon	28
Total		**110**

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:
Depressant
1 Sample Tested

Matched: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:
Psychedelic
14 Samples Tested

Matched: 10
Did not match: 3
Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:
Stimulant
28 Samples Tested

Matched: 27
Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:
Polysubstance
1 Samples Tested

Matched: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:
Opioid
55 Samples Tested

Matched: 48
Did not match: 6
Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:
Unknown
11 Samples Tested

Match not determined: 11

Total
110 Samples Tested

Matched: 87
Did not match: 10
Match not determined: 13

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents

Depressant may include: *benzodiazepines, etizolam, GHB, hypnotics*

Opioid may include: *"down," heroin, fentanyl, pharmaceutical opioids*

Polysubstance includes: *cross-category mixtures*

Psychedelic may include: *MDMA and related, 2C-family, tryptamines, ketamine, LSD*

Stimulant may include: *methamphetamine, "speed," cocaine and crack cocaine, cathinones*

Unknown includes: *samples where the individual was unable to identify an expected substance - this includes found samples.*

Number of opioid samples that matched expectation
using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:
Fentanyl
25 Samples Tested

Matched: 24
Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:
Heroin
3 Samples Tested

Matched: 1
Did not match: 2

EXPECTED DRUG:
Other Opioid
1 Samples Tested

Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:
Down
24 Samples Tested

Matched: 23
Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:
Pharmaceutical
2 Samples Tested

Matched: 1
Did not match: 1

Total
55 Samples Tested

Matched: 49
Did not match: 6

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents. 'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Data represented here are collected from our partner sites across the province. Drug samples are tested using the Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometer in combination with fentanyl test strips and benzodiazapine test strips.

There is 5% fentanyl detection limit on the FTIR spectrometer (McCrae, 2019), and a drug check on any given sample consists of both the FTIR and BTNX fentanyl immunoassay test strip testing done in combination. When applicable, BTNX benzodiazepine immunoassay test strips are also used.

BCCSU gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following partners:

BRITISH COLUMBIA CENTRE ON SUBSTANCE USE
Networking researchers, educators & care providers

Interior Health

ANKORS

ASK Wellness Society
ASKWELLNESS.CA

UBC OKANAGAN