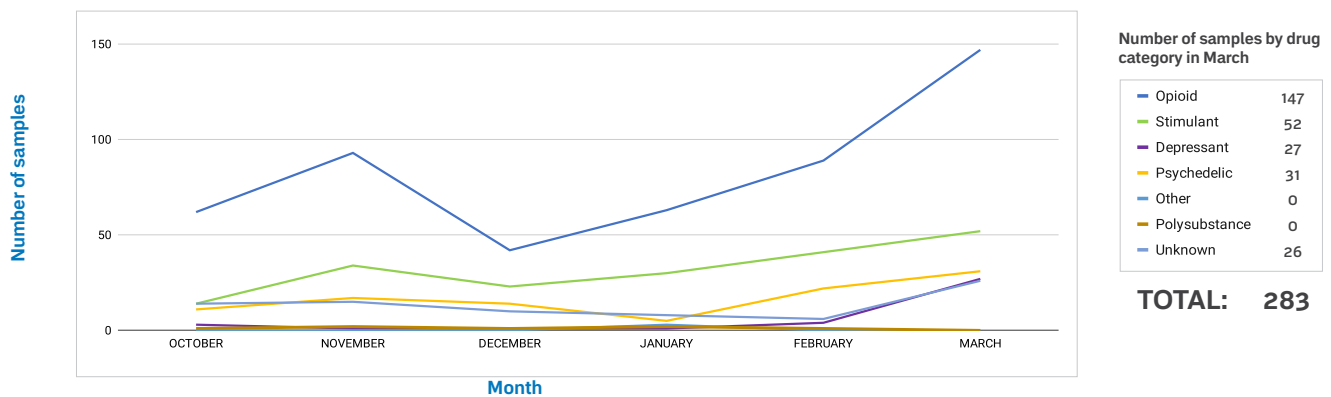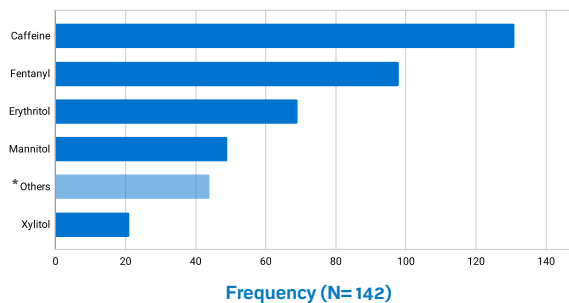# Drug Checking in Interior Health

## Key Findings

- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the region remained high (67.4%, 99 of 147 samples), but trends may be hard to infer due the large geographic 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.

- Drug checking is available in many different communities in the Interior Health region. For updated times and locations, visit our **website**.
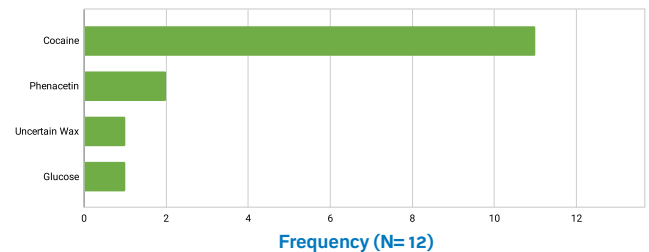
## Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



**Number of samples by drug category in March**

| | |
|---|---|
| Opioid | 147 |
| Stimulant | 52 |
| Depressant | 27 |
| Psychedelic | 31 |
| Other | 0 |
| Polysubstance | 0 |
| Unknown | 26 |

**TOTAL:** 283

## Components found in drug samples in March

### Components in opioids



Frequency (N= 142)

### Components in cocaine



Frequency (N= 12)

### *Other components found in opioids
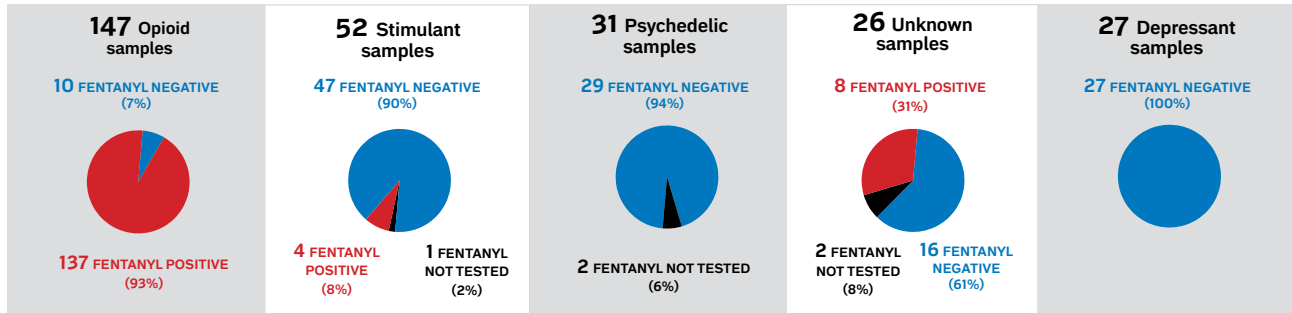


Frequency (N= 142)
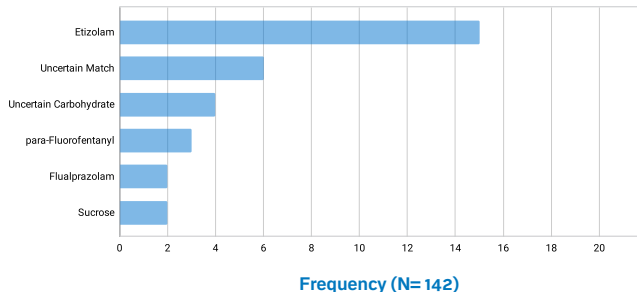
### Components in methamphetamine



Frequency (N= 38)
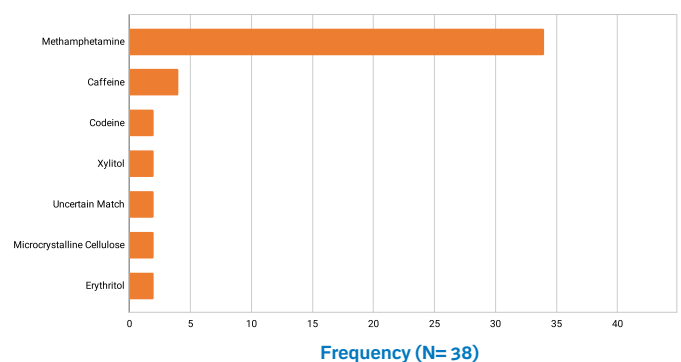
There were additional compounds detected a single time each. To save space, they have been omitted from these charts. For the full list of compounds detected, visit our data dashboard at www.drugcheckingbc.ca/dashboard/

**www.drugcheckingbc.ca**
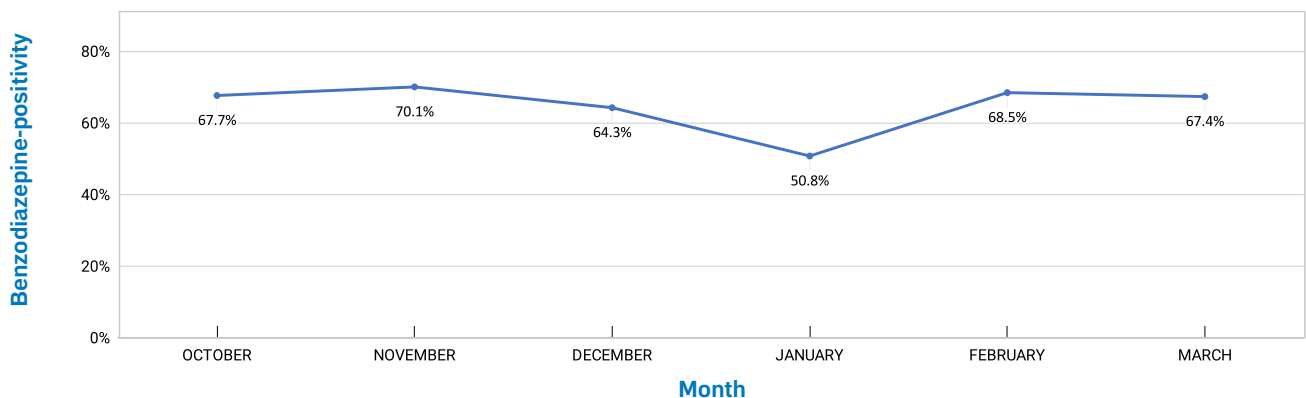
## Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

**147** Opioid samples
**10** FENTANYL NEGATIVE (7%)
**137** FENTANYL POSITIVE (93%)

**52** Stimulant samples
**47** FENTANYL NEGATIVE (90%)
**4** FENTANYL POSITIVE (8%)
**1** FENTANYL NOT TESTED (2%)

**31** Psychedelic samples
**29** FENTANYL NEGATIVE (94%)
**2** FENTANYL NOT TESTED (6%)

**26** Unknown samples
**8** FENTANYL POSITIVE (31%)
**2** FENTANYL NOT TESTED (8%)
**16** FENTANYL NEGATIVE (61%)

**27** Depressant samples
**27** FENTANYL NEGATIVE (100%)

## PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

| Date & Location | Expected Drug | Drugs Detected | Fentanyl Strip | Benzo Strip | Area Purchased | Alert Message |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| March 25 2022 ASK Wellness Penticton | Down or fentanyl Grey pebbles | Caffeine, Erythritol, Fentanyl | Positive | Positive | Penticton | Higher than normal concentration of fentanyl in a sample adulterated with benzodiazepines poses a risk of opioid toxicity. |
| Health authorities and community organizations issue further toxic drug alerts from sources other than drug checking. See their respective websites or social media accounts for more alerts. | | | | | | |

**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

- OCTOBER: 67.7%
- NOVEMBER: 70.1%
- DECEMBER: 64.3%
- JANUARY: 50.8%
- FEBRUARY: 68.5%
- MARCH: 67.4%

Month

During the month of March, **67.4%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Interior Health **(99 samples of 147 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 | Nelson | 52 |
| | Trail | 8 |
| | Castlegar | 1 |
| | Grand Forks | 16 |
| | Cranbrook | 25 |
| ASK Wellness | Kamloops | 42 |
| | Penticton | 35 |
| | Meritt | 3 |
| UBCO Hart | Kelowna | 59 |
| | Vernon | 40 |
| **Total** | | **281** |

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

**EXPECTED DRUG:**
### Psychedelic
*31 Samples Tested*

Matched: 27
Did not match: 2
Match not determined: 2

**EXPECTED DRUG:**
### Stimulant
*52 Samples Tested*

Matched: 47
Did not match: 5

**EXPECTED DRUG:**
### Depressant
*27 Samples Tested*

Matched: 17
Did not match: 10

**EXPECTED DRUG:**
### Opioid
*147 Samples Tested*

Matched: 137
Did not match: 8
Match not determined: 2

**EXPECTED DRUG:**
### Unknown
*26 Samples Tested*

Match not determined: 26

### Total
*283 Samples Tested*

Matched: 228
Did not match: 25
Match not determined: 30

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
*119 Samples Tested*

**Matched: 114**
**Did not match: 5**

**EXPECTED DRUG:**
### Heroin
*2 Samples Tested*

**Did not match: 2**

**EXPECTED DRUG:**
### Opium
*1 Samples Tested*

**Matched: 1**

**EXPECTED DRUG:**
### Down
*21 Samples Tested*

**Matched: 21**

**EXPECTED DRUG:**
### Pharmaceutical
*4 Samples Tested*

**Matched: 1**
**Did not match: 1**
**Match not determined: 2**

### Total
*147 Samples Tested*

**Matched: 137**
**Did not match: 8**
**Match not determined: 2**

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