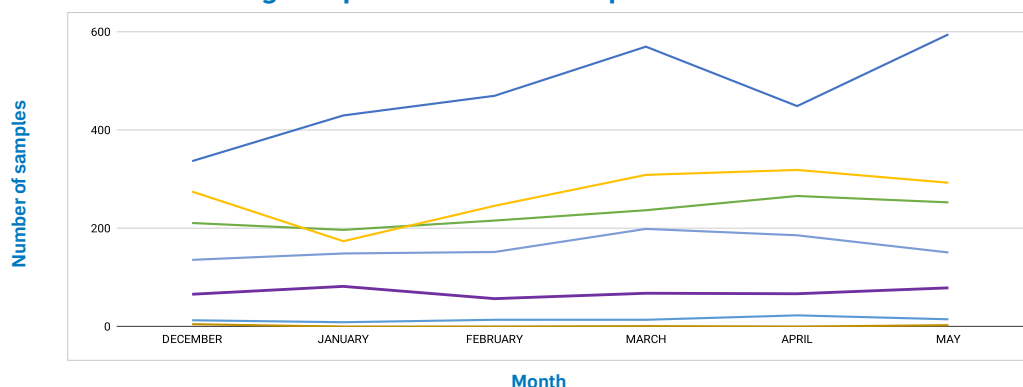


## Key Findings

- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines was 31.8% (189 of 585 samples), the highest proportion ever detected in this region. The true rate may still be higher than reported here because etizolam, the predominant benzodiazepine in expected opioids, may be missed by drug checking technologies.
- There may be an ongoing shift from benzodiazepine-adulteration of opioids with etizolam to other benzodiazepines such as flualprazolam, flubromazolam, and flubromazepam, which are better detected with benzodiazepine test strips and cause the overall detection numbers to increase. These drugs are potent sedatives which can cause blackouts, memory loss, and make it difficult to tell when someone is experiencing opioid toxicity.
- The fentanyl analogue para-fluorofentanyl is appearing in down more frequently. Para-fluorofentanyl is believed to be less potent than fentanyl and is accurately detected with fentanyl test strips.

## Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



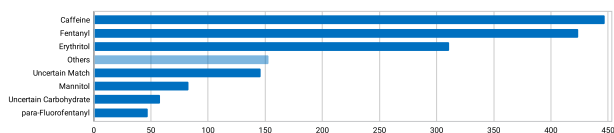
Number of samples by drug category in May

Opioid	595
Stimulant	253
Depressant	79
Psychedelic	293
Other	15
Polysubstance	3
Unknown	151

**TOTAL: 1,389**

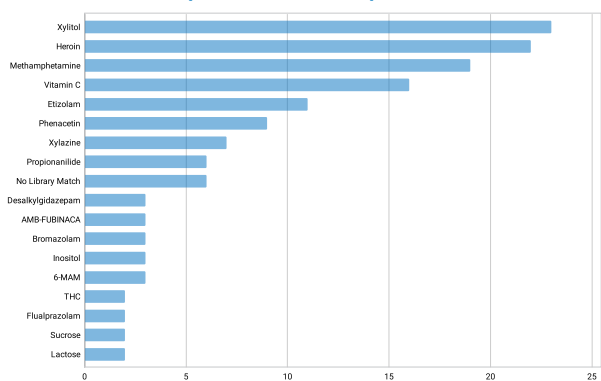
## Components found in drug samples in May

### Components in opioids



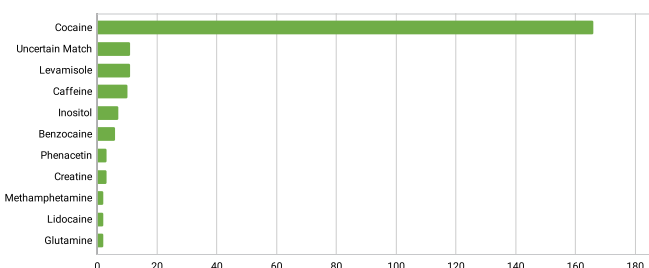
Frequency (N= 541)

### Other components found in opioids



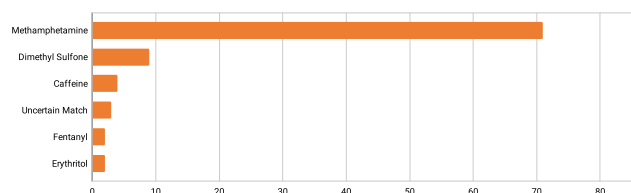
Frequency (N= 541)

### Components in cocaine



Frequency (N= 170)

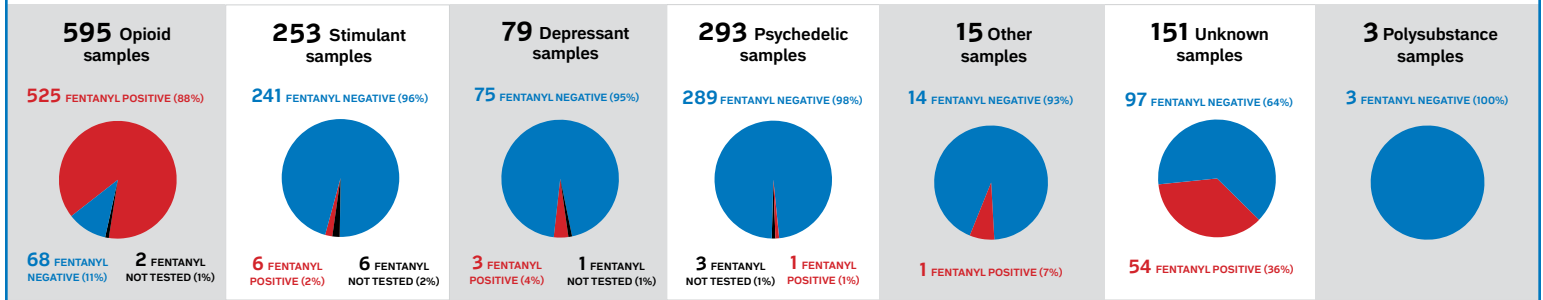
### Components in methamphetamine



Frequency (N= 73)

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/](http://www.drugcheckingbc.ca/dashboard/)

## Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

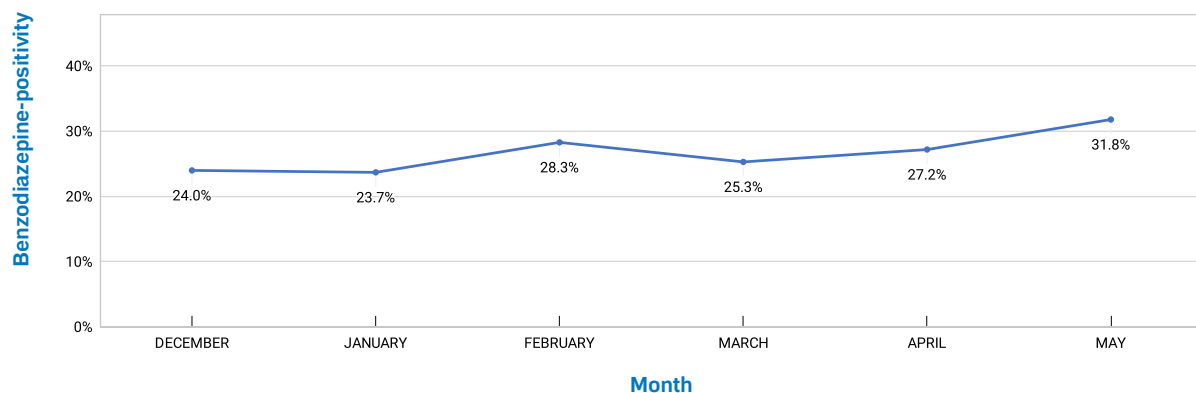


## PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
May 4 2022 Get Your Drugs Tested Vancouver	Down/Fentanyl	Caffeine, Fentanyl, Xylazine, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Combining depressants increases the risk of overdose, and the harms of xylazine and bromazolam are not well known.
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.						

To receive drug contamination alerts, text "alert" to (236) 999-DOPE (3673)

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




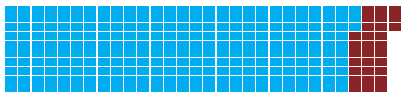
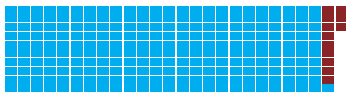

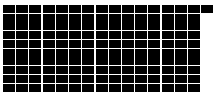
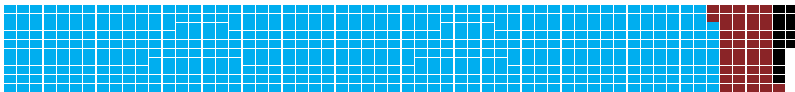

During the month of May, **31.8%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**189 samples of 585 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here are derived from both of these technologies and are presumptive until confirmed by a laboratory.

## Number of drugs checks and hours at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested	1,086
Insite	296
Overdose Prevention Society	3
Molson OPS	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,389</b>

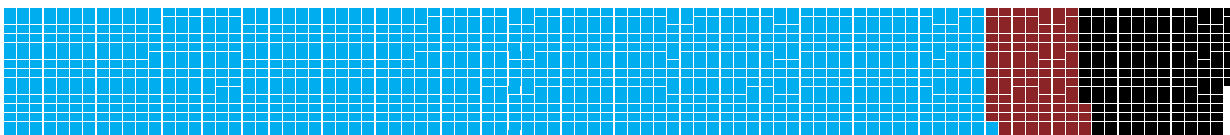
## Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p><b>EXPECTED DRUG:</b> <b>Depressant</b> 79 Samples Tested</p>  <p><b>Matched: 58</b> <b>Did not match: 20</b> <b>Match not determined: 1</b></p>	<p><b>EXPECTED DRUG:</b> <b>Psychedelic</b> 293 Samples Tested</p>  <p><b>Matched: 263</b> <b>Did not match: 30</b></p>	<p><b>EXPECTED DRUG:</b> <b>Stimulant</b> 253 Samples Tested</p>  <p><b>Matched: 241</b> <b>Did not match: 12</b></p>	<p><b>EXPECTED DRUG:</b> <b>Polysubstance</b> 3 Sample Tested</p>  <p><b>Matched: 3</b></p>
<p><b>EXPECTED DRUG:</b> <b>Unknown</b> 151 Samples Tested</p>  <p><b>Match not determined: 151</b></p>	<p><b>EXPECTED DRUG:</b> <b>Opioid</b> 595 Samples Tested</p>  <p><b>Matched: 538</b> <b>Did not match: 43</b> <b>Match not determined: 14</b></p>	<p><b>EXPECTED DRUG:</b> <b>Other</b> 15 Sample Tested</p>  <p><b>Matched: 9</b> <b>Did not match: 2</b> <b>Match not determined: 4</b></p>	

### Total

1,389 Samples Tested



**Matched: 1,112**

**Did not match: 107**

**Match not determined: 170**

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

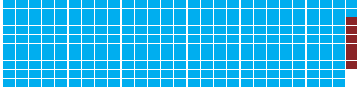





**Psychedelic may include:**  
MDMA and related,  
2C-family, tryptamines,  
ketamine, LSD

**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.

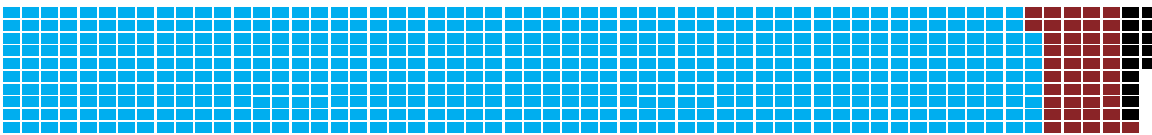
## Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Fentanyl</b> 268 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 262 Did not match: 6</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Heroin</b> 19 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 7 Did not match: 12</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Fentanyl and Heroin</b> 1 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Did not match: 1</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Down</b> 253 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 246 Did not match: 5 Match not determined: 2</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Pharmaceutical</b> 50 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 23 Did not match: 15 Match not determined: 12</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Other Opioid</b> 4 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Did not match: 4</p>

### Total

595 Samples Tested



Matched: 538  
Did not match: 43  
Match not determined: 14

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 benzodiazepine 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:

