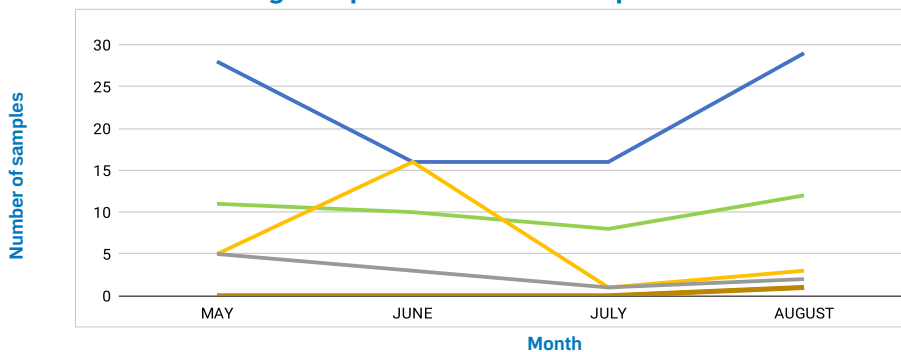


Key Findings

- Drug checking services with FTIR and test strips are now available in the Northern Health Region. Services are available at POUNDS in Prince George and the Northwest Intensive Case Management Team (ICMT) location in Terrace. For updated times and locations, visit <https://www.northernhealth.ca/health-topics/overdose-prevention#drug-checking>
- A total of 49 drug checks were conducted across these two sites in the Northern Health region in August, up from 26 samples the previous month. Opioids and stimulants comprised the majority of samples checked.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the region increased from 37.5% to 44.8% in August (13 of 29 samples). The true rate may be higher than reported here as etizolam, a benzodiazepine-like substance, may be missed by drug checking technologies.
- From the 49 samples tested in August, results seem consistent with other areas of the province. Fentanyl was detected in 28 out of 29 opioid samples checked. 1 stimulant sample tested positive for fentanyl in August.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 4 months



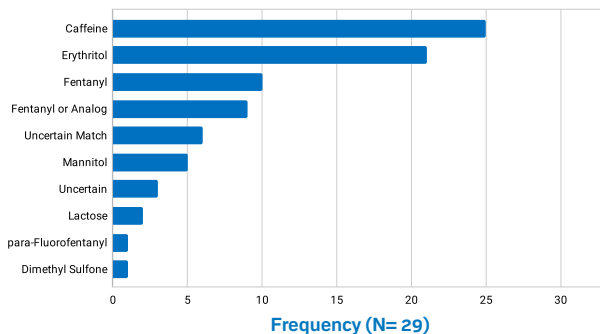
Number of samples by drug category in August

Opioid	29
Stimulant	12
Depressant	1
Psychedelic	3
Other	1
Polysubstance	1
Unknown	2

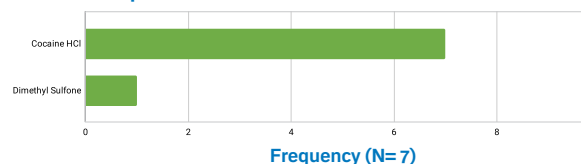
TOTAL: 49

Components found in drug samples in August

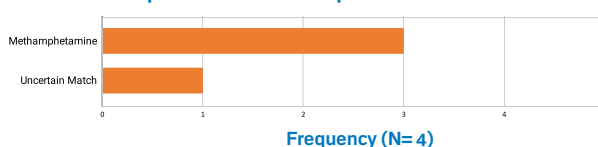
Components in opioids



Components in cocaine

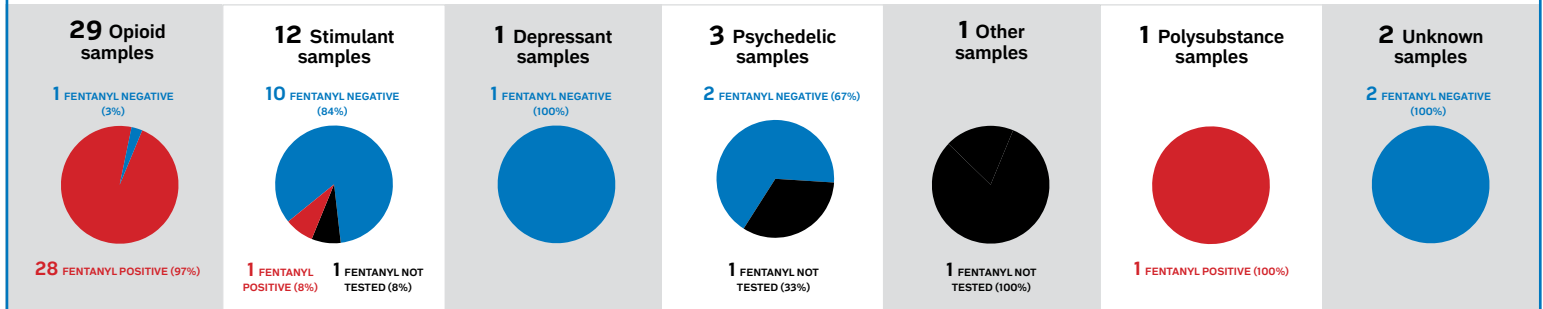


Components in methamphetamine



During the month of August, **44.8%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Northern Health (**13 samples of 29 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 samples tested with fentanyl present











PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

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




Number of drugs checks at each site

Location	# of drug checks
POUNDS (Prince George)	32
Northwest ICMT (Terrace)	14
Overdose Prevention Community Health Fair	3

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

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Opioid 29 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 28 Did Not Match: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Stimulant 12 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 11 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Depressant 1 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Psychedelic 3 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 2 Did Not Match: 1</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Other 1 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Polysubstance 1 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Did Not Match: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Unknown 2 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Match not determined: 2</p>	
<p>Total</p>  <p>49 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 43 Did Not Match: 3 Match not determined: 3</p>			

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

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Fentanyl 1 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Down 28 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 27 Did Not Match: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Total 29 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 28 Did Not Match: 1</p>
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Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents

Depressant August include: benzodiazepines, etizolam, GHB, hypnotics

Opioid August include: "down," heroin, fentanyl, pharmaceutical opioids

Polysubstance includes: cross-category mixtures

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

Stimulant August 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.

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:

