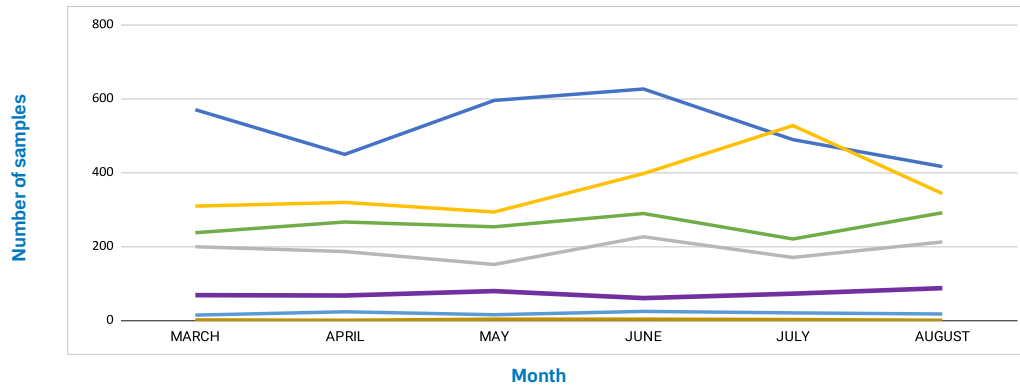


Key Findings

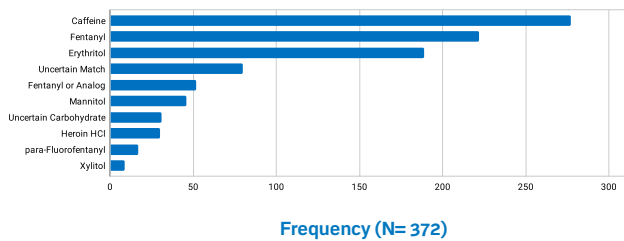
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines decreased from 27.6% last month, to 23.1% in August (96 of 416 samples). The true rate may still be higher than reported here because some benzodiazepine-like substances like etizolam in expected opioids, may be missed by drug checking technologies.
- Etizolam was the most frequent benzodiazepine detected by FTIR in the month of August, found present in 8 opioid samples.
- Xylazine, a non-opioid veterinary tranquilizer, continues to be detected by FTIR drug checking services in Vancouver Coastal Health and through confirmatory testing. Xylazine trends may be hard to infer due to the small number of samples and may be higher than reported here because xylazine may be missed by drug checking technologies.
- 10 drug alerts were issued within VCH in August, with many concerning samples being sold as one substance but testing as other unexpected substances (e.g. sold as crack cocaine but testing as fentanyl with xylazine).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months

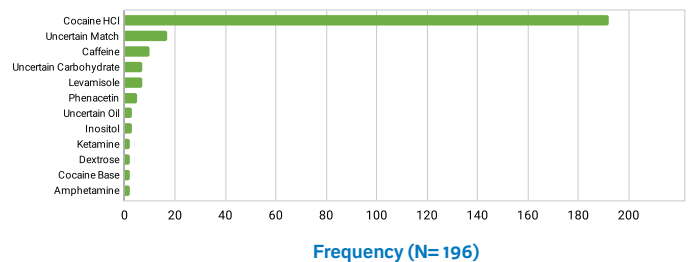


Components found in drug samples in August

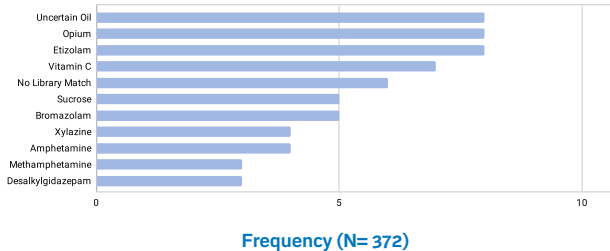
Components in opioids



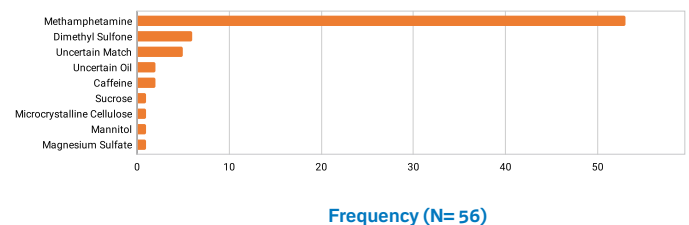
Components in cocaine



Other components found in opioids

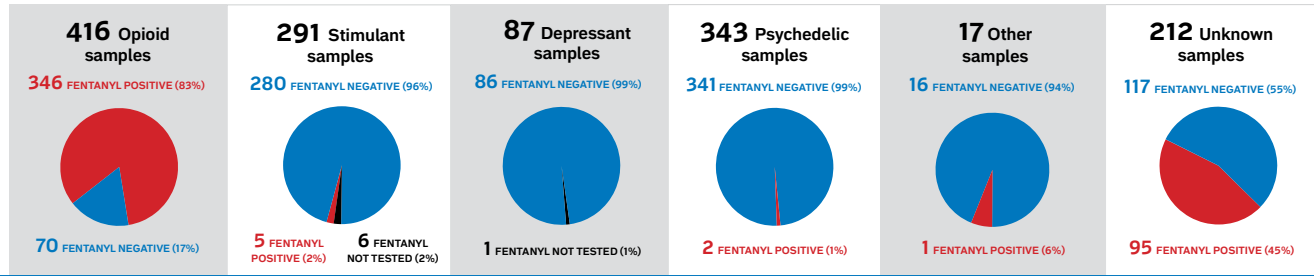


Components in methamphetamine



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/

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



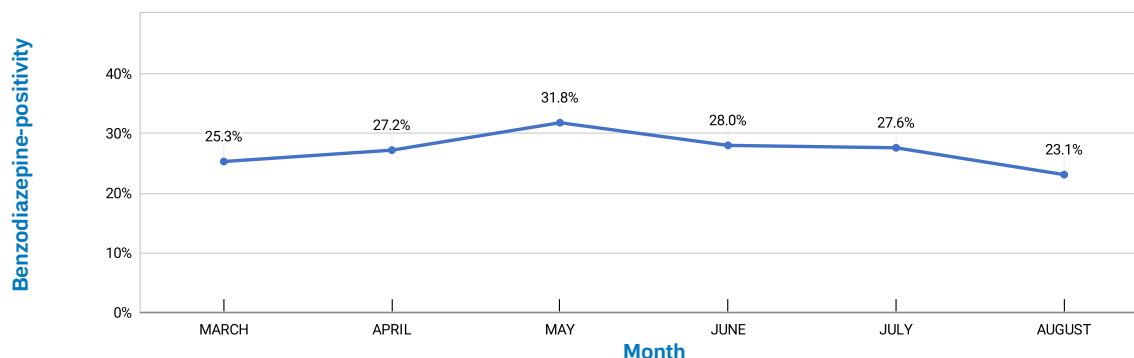
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
August 2 2022 Vancouver	Down	Caffeine, Fentanyl, Heroin, MDMA	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Combining depressants such as opioids and benzodiazepines increases the risk of overdose. Sample also contained an unexpected stimulant.
August 8 2022 Vancouver	Unknown	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Fentanyl	Positive	Negative	Vancouver	Sample resembled a morphine pill, but contained a high concentration of fentanyl, increasing the risk of overdose.
August 8 2022 Vancouver	Fentanyl	Xylazine	Negative	Negative	Vancouver	Sample was sold as fentanyl but instead contained a high concentration of xylazine, an animal tranquilizer linked to soft tissue injury.
August 11 2022 Vancouver	Acetaminophen and Oxycodone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Fentanyl	Positive	N/A	Vancouver	Risk of overdose is increased as sample was sold as a Percocet pill but instead contains fentanyl.
August 15 2022 Vancouver	Crack Cocaine	Crack Cocaine	Positive	Negative	Vancouver	The unexpected presence of fentanyl poses significant risk of opioid toxicity, especially for opioid-naïve individuals.
August 15 2022 Vancouver	Flubromazolam	Alpha-PHIP	Negative	Negative	Vancouver	Sample was sold as a benzodiazepine but instead tested as a cathinone-class stimulant.
August 15 2022 Vancouver	Fentanyl	GHB	Negative	Negative	Vancouver	Sample was sold as liquid fentanyl, but tested as GHB.
August 19 2022 Vancouver	3-HO-PCP	Fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Risk of overdose is high as sample was sold as a dissociative, but tested as high concentration of fentanyl with benzodiazepines present.
August 19 2022 Vancouver	Crack Cocaine	Fentanyl, Xylazine, Caffeine, Erythritol	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Combination of fentanyl, xylazine, and benzodiazepines poses very high risk of overdose, especially when unexpected. This sample has been associated with multiple overdoses.
August 23 2022 Vancouver	Cocaine	Mannitol, Caffeine, Fentanyl, Methamphetamine	Positive	Negative	Vancouver	Sample poses a very high risk of overdose, as was sold as cocaine, but instead contains fentanyl. This sample has been associated with an overdose.

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 August, **23.1%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**96 samples of 416 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	1,201
Insite	157
Overdose Prevention Society	6
Molson OPS	2
Total	1,366

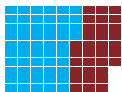
Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Depressant

87 Samples Tested

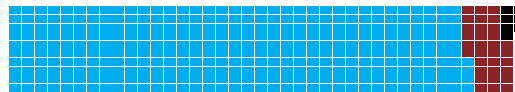


Matched: 54
Did not match: 33

EXPECTED DRUG:

Psychedelic

343 Samples Tested

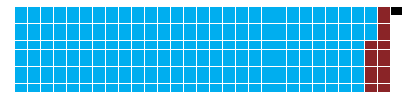


Matched: 304
Did not match: 32
Match not determined: 7

EXPECTED DRUG:

Stimulant

291 Samples Tested

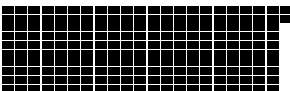


Matched: 274
Did not match: 16
Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Unknown

212 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 212

EXPECTED DRUG:

Opioid

416 Samples Tested



Matched: 372
Did not match: 31
Match not determined: 13

EXPECTED DRUG:

Other

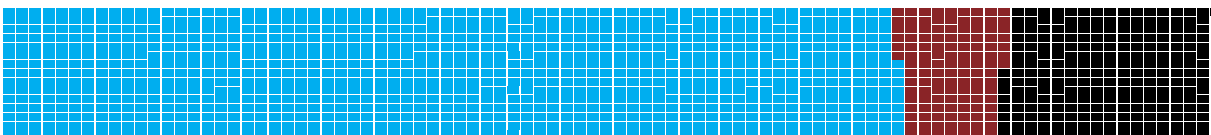
17 Sample Tested



Matched: 10
Did not match: 6
Match not determined: 1

Total

1,366 Samples Tested



Matched: 1,014
Did not match: 118
Match not determined: 234

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

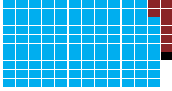





Psychedelic August include: MDMA and related, 2C-family, tryptamines, ketamine, LSD

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.

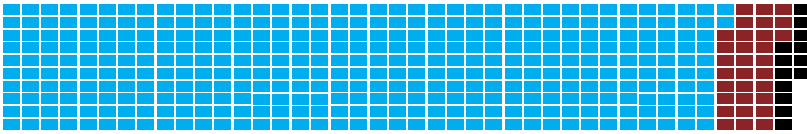
Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Fentanyl 127 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 118 Did not match: 8 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Heroin 18 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 16 Did not match: 1 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Other Opioid 3 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Did not match: 3</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Down 216 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 214 Did not match: 2</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Pharmaceutical 44 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 16 Did not match: 16 Match not determined: 12</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Opium 8 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 8</p>

Total

416 Samples Tested



Matched: 372
Did not match: 31
Match not determined: 13

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:

