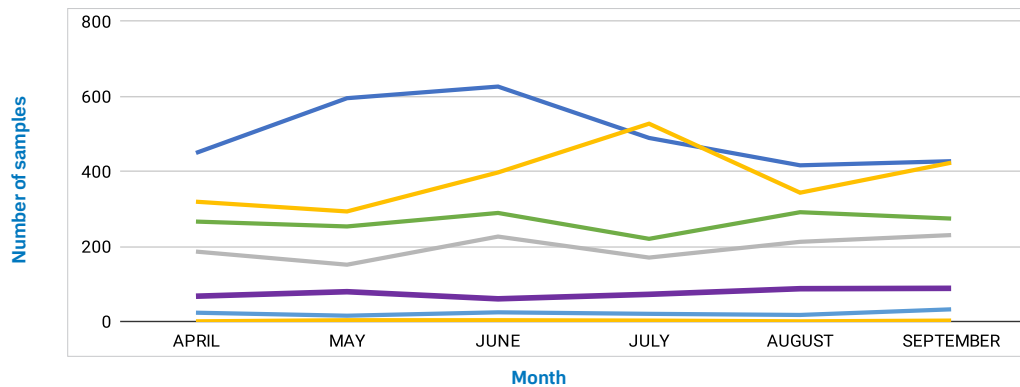


## Key Findings

- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines decreased slightly from 23.1% last month, to 22.7% in September (97 of 427 samples). The true rate may still be higher than reported here because benzodiazepines, and benzodiazepine-like substances like etizolam, may be missed by drug checking technologies.
- The fentanyl analogue para-fluorofentanyl is appearing in down more frequently. This month, para-fluorofentanyl was detected in 21 opioid samples within the VCH region.
- Bromazolam was the most frequent benzodiazepine detected by FTIR in the month of September, found present in 11 opioid samples.
- Xylazine, a non-opioid veterinary tranquilizer, continues to be detected by FTIR drug checking services in Vancouver Coastal Health. Xylazine trends may be hard to infer due to the small number of samples and may be higher than reported here because xylazine is often present in lower concentrations and may be missed by drug checking technologies.

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



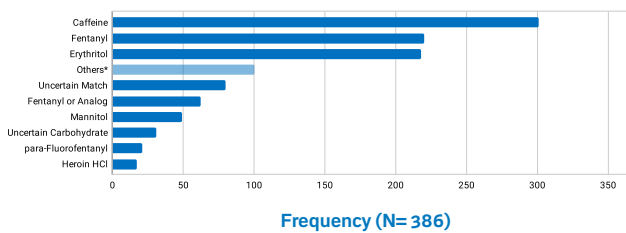
Number of samples by drug category in September

Opioid	427
Stimulant	274
Depressant	88
Psychedelic	423
Other	32
Polysubstance	2
Unknown	230

**TOTAL: 1,476**

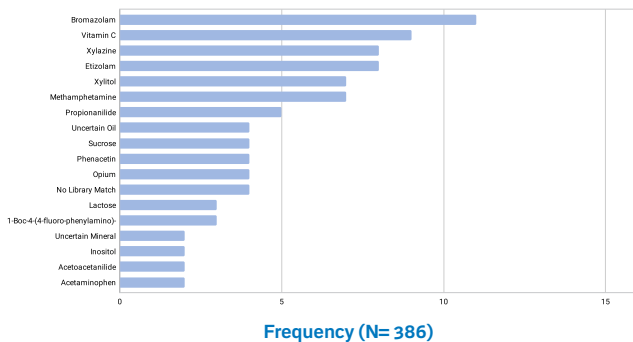
## Components found in drug samples in September

### Components in opioids



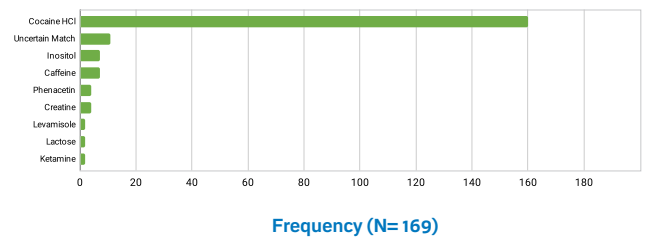
Frequency (N= 386)

### Other components found in opioids



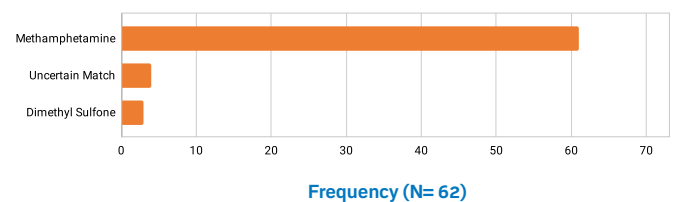
Frequency (N= 386)

### Components in cocaine



Frequency (N= 169)

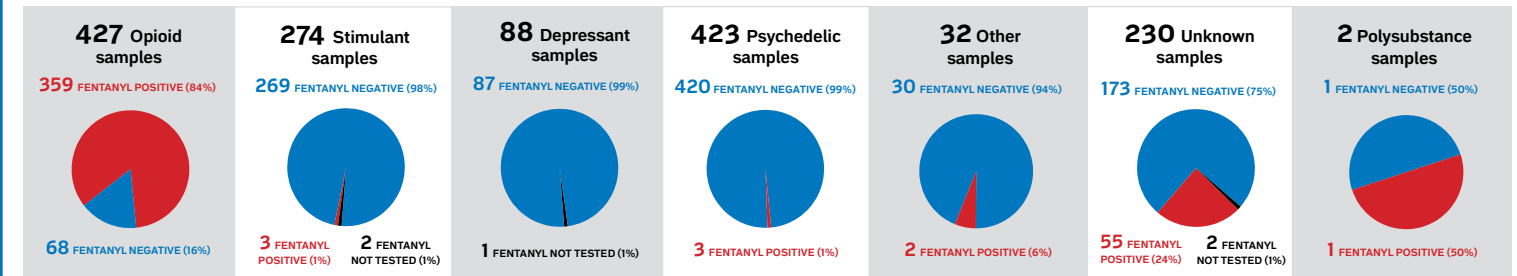
### Components in methamphetamine



Frequency (N= 62)

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



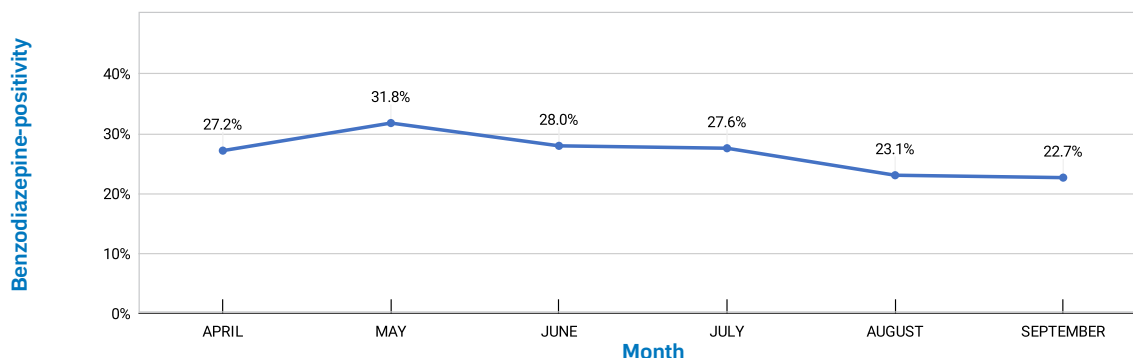
## PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
September 1 2022 Vancouver	Methamphetamine	Methamphetamine, Levamisole	Negative	Positive	Vancouver	Unexpected presence of benzodiazepines may pose risk of loss of consciousness.
September 2 2022 Vancouver	Cocaine	Flubromazepam	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Risk of overdose is high as sample was sold as cocaine but instead tested as a benzodiazepine with fentanyl present. Sample has been associated with an overdose.
September 6 2022 Vancouver	Methamphetamine	Methamphetamine	Positive	Positive	Powell River	Unexpected presence of fentanyl and benzodiazepines poses risk of overdose.
September 26 2022 Vancouver	Fentanyl	Xylazine, Fentanyl	Positive	Negative	Vancouver	Sample was sold as fentanyl but primarily contained a high concentration of xylazine, an animal tranquilizer linked to soft tissue injury.
September 26 2022 Vancouver	MDMA	MDMA, TFMP	Negative	N/A	Vancouver	TFMP is a piperazine-derived novel stimulant, which may cause adverse symptoms such as agitation and anxiety.

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 September, **22.7%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**97 samples of 427 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

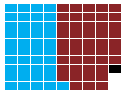
Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested	1,275
Insite	160
Overdose Prevention Society	40
Molson OPS	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,476</b>

## Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:  
**Depressant**

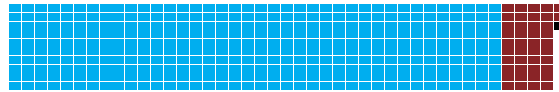
88 Samples Tested



Matched: 41  
Did not match: 46  
Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:  
**Psychedelic**

423 Samples Tested



Matched: 380  
Did not match: 42  
Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:  
**Stimulant**

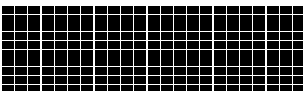
274 Samples Tested



Matched: 260  
Did not match: 14

EXPECTED DRUG:  
**Unknown**

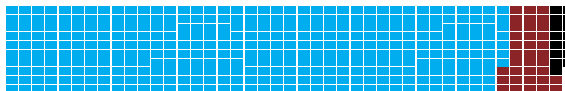
230 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 230

EXPECTED DRUG:  
**Opioid**

427 Samples Tested



Matched: 377  
Did not match: 35  
Match not determined: 15

EXPECTED DRUG:  
**Other**

32 Sample Tested



Matched: 20  
Did not match: 12

EXPECTED DRUG:  
**Polysubstance**

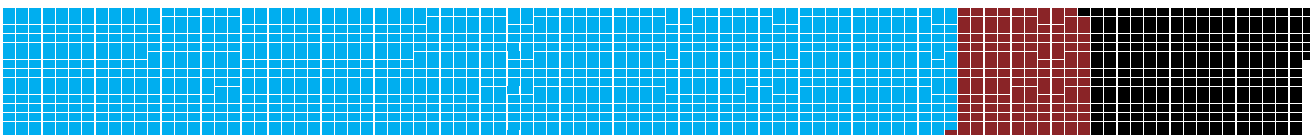
2 Sample Tested



Matched: 1  
Did not match: 1

### Total

1,476 Samples Tested



Matched: 1,079  
Did not match: 150  
Match not determined: 247

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

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

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

**Polysubstance includes:** cross-category mixtures

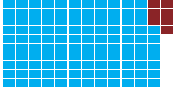


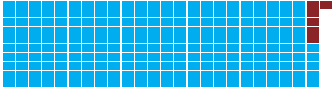


**Psychedelic September include:** MDMA and related, 2C-family, tryptamines, ketamine, LSD

**Stimulant September 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.

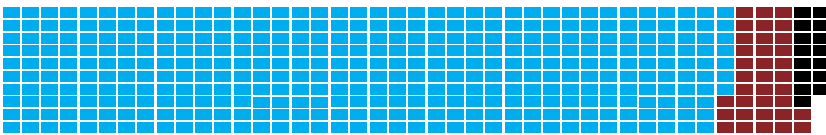
## Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Fentanyl</b> 124 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 117 Did not match: 7</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Heroin</b> 14 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 12 Did not match: 2</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Other Opioid</b> 2 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Did not match: 2</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Down</b> 241 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 234 Did not match: 7</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Pharmaceutical</b> 41 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 9 Did not match: 17 Match not determined: 15</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Opium</b> 5 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 5</p>

### Total

427 Samples Tested



Matched: 377  
Did not match: 35  
Match not determined: 15

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:

