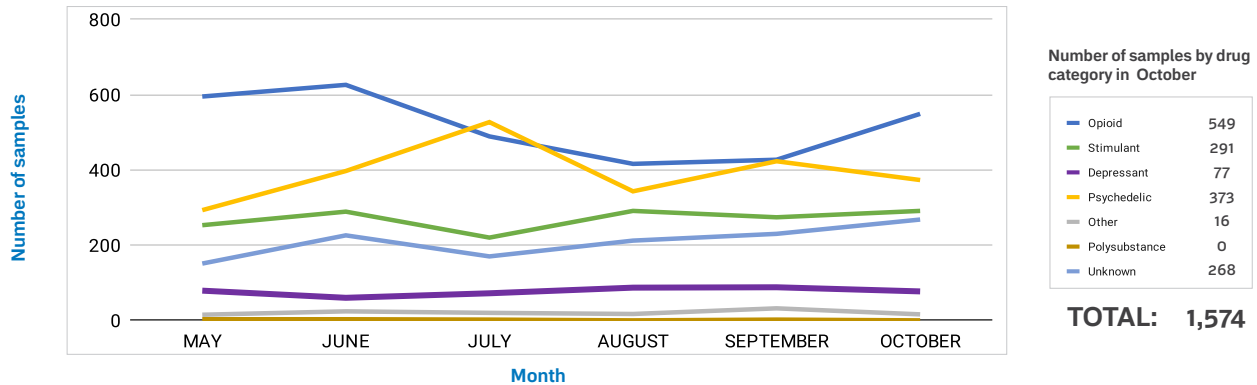


Key Findings

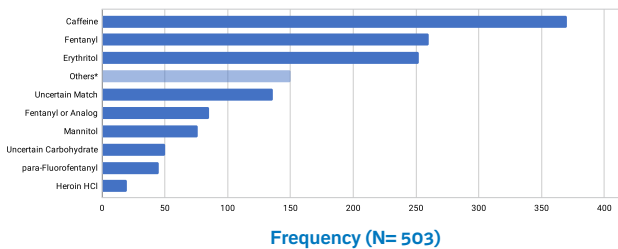
- In October, a total of 1574 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Vancouver Coastal region.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to 26.4% in October (145 of 549 samples), following a downward trend over the past 5 months. The true rate may be higher than reported here because benzodiazepines, and benzodiazepine-like substances like etizolam, may be missed by drug checking technologies.
- Etizolam was the most frequent benzodiazepine detected by FTIR in the month of October (found present in 13 opioid samples), followed by bromazolam (8).
- VCH issued 5 drug alerts from samples tested in the region, most concerning samples that had been sold as one substance but instead tested as fentanyl, or tested positive for the presence of fentanyl by test strip.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months

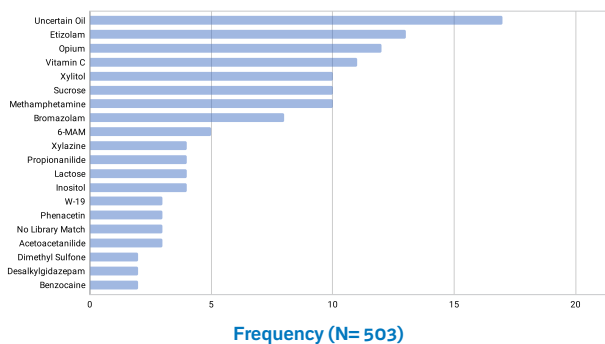


Components found in drug samples in October

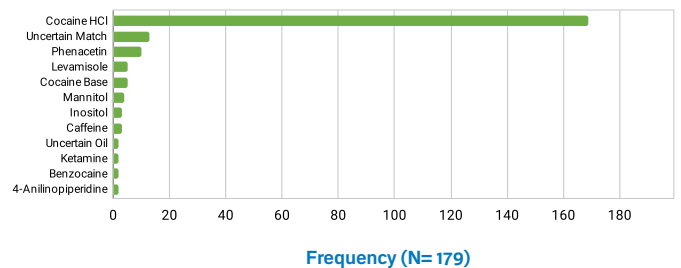
Components in opioids



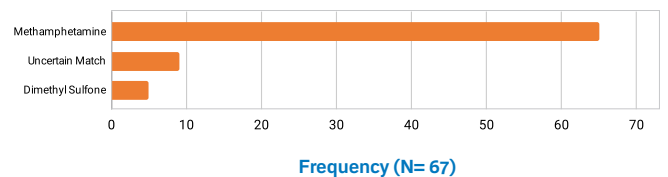
Other components found in opioids



Components in cocaine

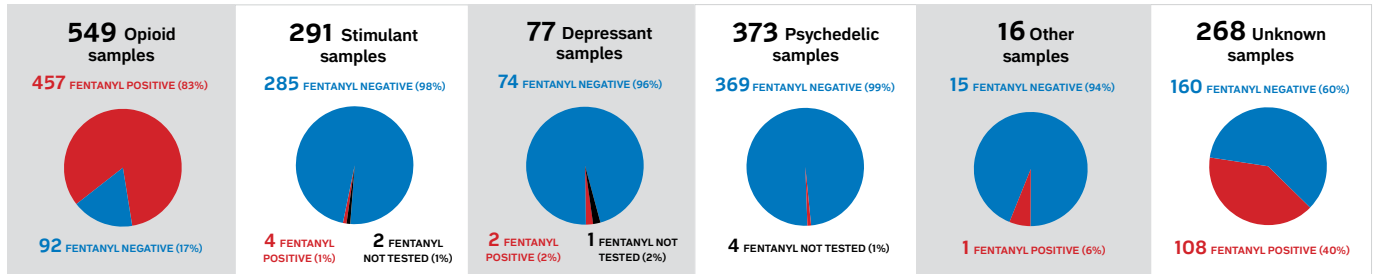


Components in methamphetamine



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



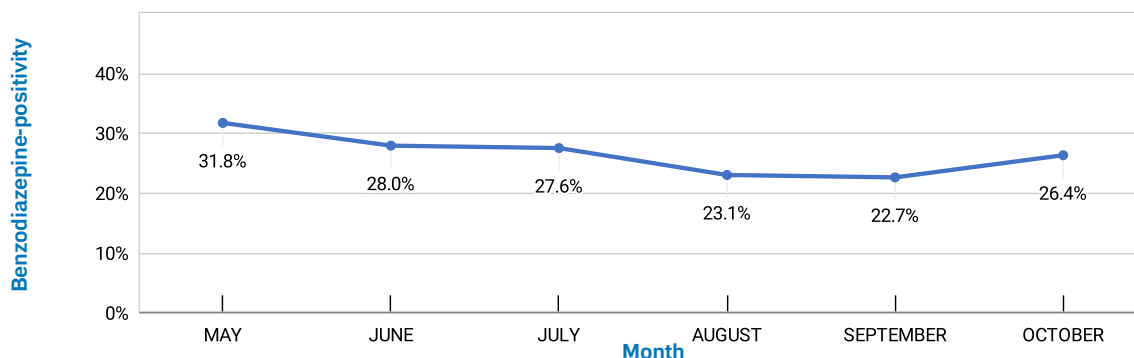
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
October 7 2022 Vancouver	Acetaminophen and Oxycodone (Percocet)	Microcrystalline cellulose, lactose, uncertain oil, caffeine	Positive	Negative	Vancouver	Presence of fentanyl in counterfeit Percocet poses risk of opioid toxicity.
October 11 2022 Vancouver	Cocaine	Fentanyl, Cocaine	Positive	Negative	Vancouver DTES	Sample sold as cocaine but tested mostly as fentanyl, posing a high risk of overdose to someone expecting cocaine.
October 11 2022 Vancouver	Alprazolam (Xanax)	Microcrystalline cellulose, PVP (polymer), uncertain oil	Positive	Negative	Vancouver	Presence of fentanyl in counterfeit Xanax may cause overdose when consumed unknowingly.
October 12 2022 Vancouver	Fentanyl	GHB	Positive	Negative	Vancouver DTES	Sample was sold as "liquid fentanyl", but instead tested as GHB with some fentanyl present. May also pose risk of opioid toxicity if expecting GHB.
October 27 2022 DTES	Heroin	Caffeine, cocaine base, mannitol, para-fluorofentanyl	Positive	Positive	Vancouver DTES	High concentration of fentanyl analogue, and presence of benzodiazepines, increases risk of overdose if expecting heroin.

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 October, **26.4%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**145 samples of 549 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	1,313
Insite	233
Molson OPS	28
Total	1,574

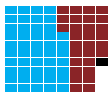
Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Depressant

77 Samples Tested



Matched: 47

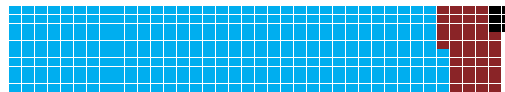
Did not match: 29

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Psychedelic

373 Samples Tested



Matched: 325

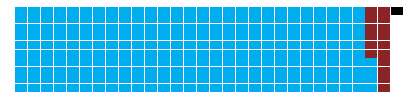
Did not match: 42

Match not determined: 6

EXPECTED DRUG:

Stimulant

291 Samples Tested



Matched: 274

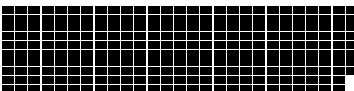
Did not match: 16

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Unknown

268 Samples Tested

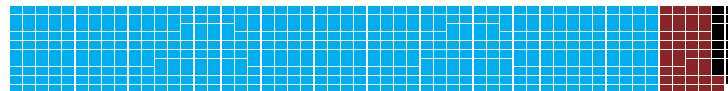


Match not determined: 268

EXPECTED DRUG:

Opioid

549 Samples Tested



Matched: 490

Did not match: 42

Match not determined: 17

EXPECTED DRUG:

Other

16 Sample Tested



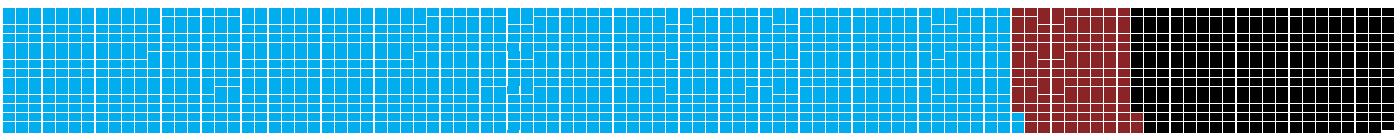
Matched: 7

Did not match: 6

Match not determined: 3

Total

1,574 Samples Tested



Matched: 1,143

Did not match: 135

Match not determined: 296

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

Depressant include:
benzodiazepines, etizolam,
GHB, hypnotics

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

Polysubstance includes:
cross-category mixtures

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

Stimulant 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.

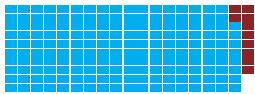
Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Fentanyl

188 Samples Tested



Matched: 178
Did not match: 10

EXPECTED DRUG:

Heroin

27 Samples Tested

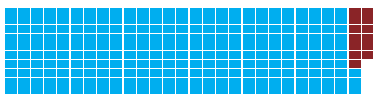


Matched: 16
Did not match: 11

EXPECTED DRUG:

Down

276 Samples Tested



Matched: 263
Did not match: 13

EXPECTED DRUG:

Pharmaceutical

46 Samples Tested



Matched: 21
Did not match: 8
Match not determined: 17

EXPECTED DRUG:

Opium

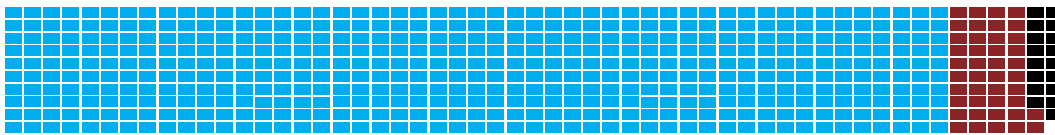
12 Samples Tested



Matched: 12

Total

549 Samples Tested



Matched: 490
Did not match: 42
Match not determined: 17

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:

