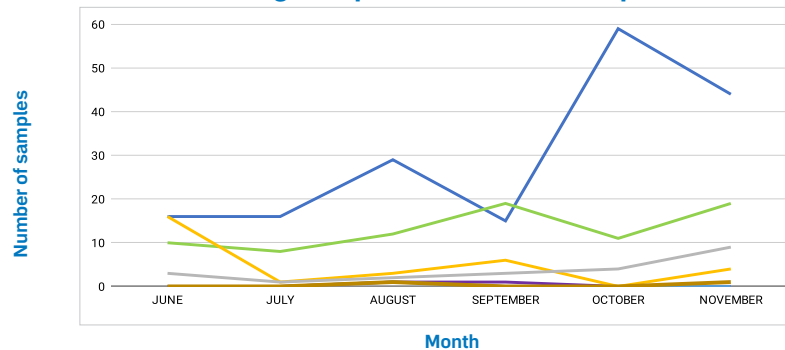


## Key Findings

- In November, a total of 77 drug checks were performed in Northern Health, the most ever observed in one month within the region to date.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the region increased from 35.6% to 56.8% in November (25 of 44 samples). Trends may be hard to infer due to the small number of samples over a large region. The true rate may be higher than reported here because benzodiazepines, and benzodiazepine-like substances like etizolam, may be missed by drug checking technologies.
- Bromazolam was the most frequent benzodiazepine detected by FTIR, found present in 4 opioid samples.
- 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, please visit the [Northern Health website](#).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



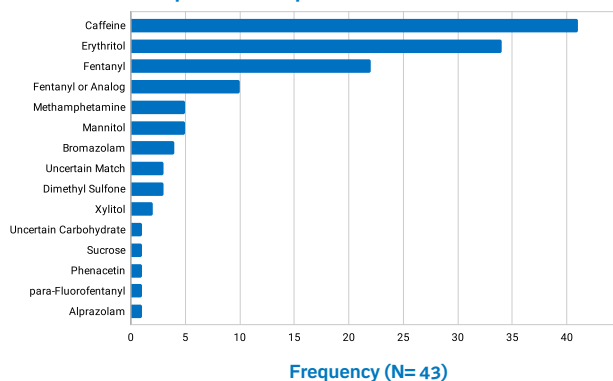
Number of samples by drug category in November

Opioid	44
Stimulant	19
Depressant	0
Psychedelic	4
Other	0
Polysubstance	1
Unknown	9

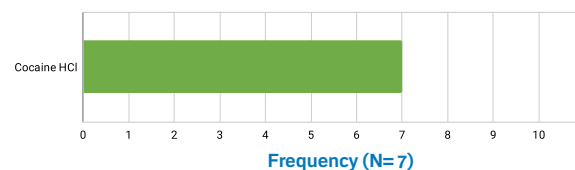
**TOTAL: 77**

Components found in drug samples in November

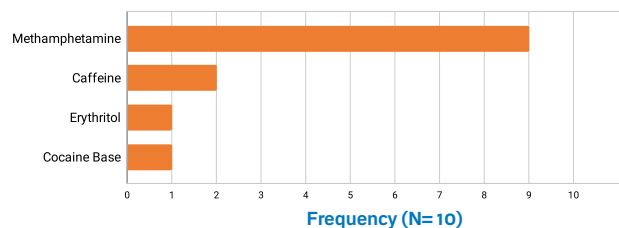
Components in opioids



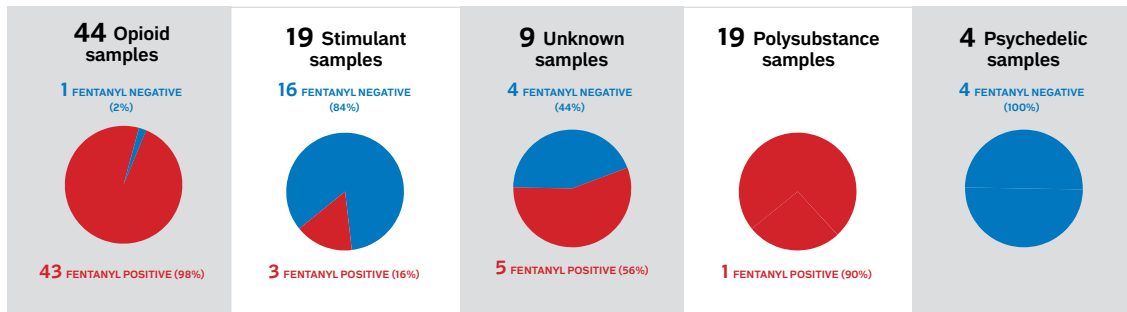
Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



## Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



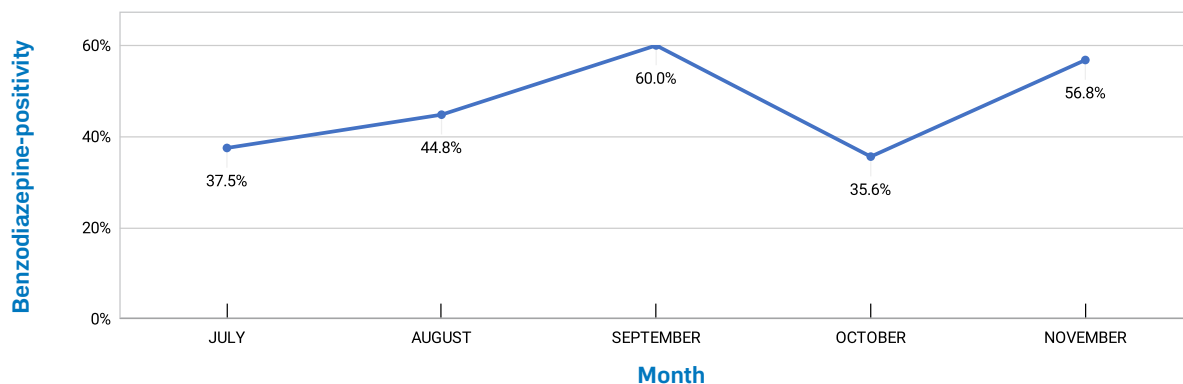
## PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

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

## Number of drugs checks at each site

Location	# of drug checks
POUNDS (Prince George)	64
Northwest ICMT (Terrace)	13
TOTAL	77

## Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the past 4 months



During the month of November, **56.8%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Northern Health (**25 samples of 44 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.

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

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Opioid**

44 Samples Tested



Matched: 43

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Stimulant**

19 Samples Tested



Matched: 18

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Psychedelic**

4 Samples Tested



Matched: 4

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Polysubstance**

1 Samples Tested



Matched: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Unknown**

9 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 9

### Total

77 Samples Tested



Matched: 66

Match not determined: 11

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

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Down**

43 Samples Tested



Matched: 43

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Pharmaceutical**

1 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 1

### Total

44 Samples Tested



Matched: 43

Match not determined: 1

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.

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:

