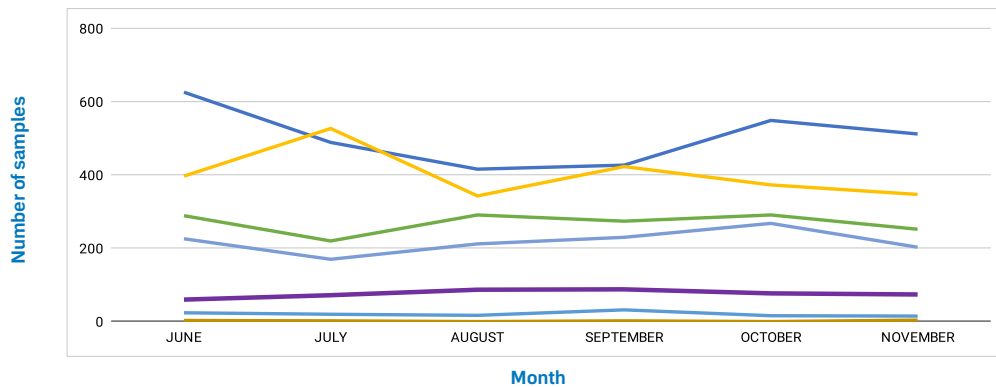


Key Findings

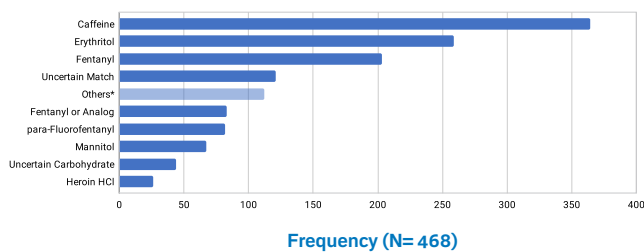
- In November, a total of 1,407 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Vancouver Coastal region.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines increased from 26.4% to 29.1% in November (149 of 512 samples). The true rate may be higher than reported 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 6 opioid samples), followed by etizolam (5 samples).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months

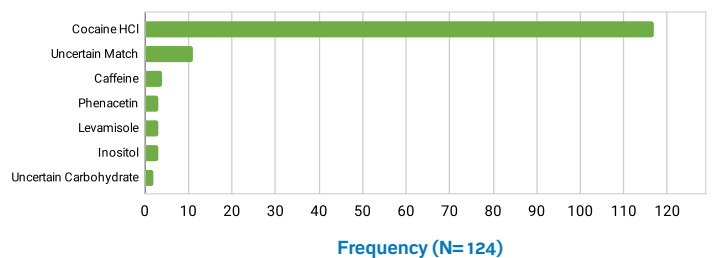


Components found in drug samples in November

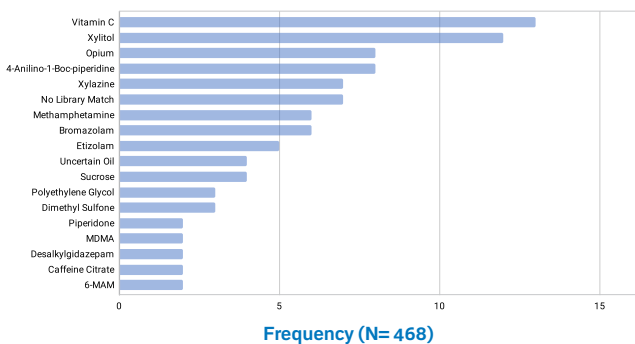
Components in opioids



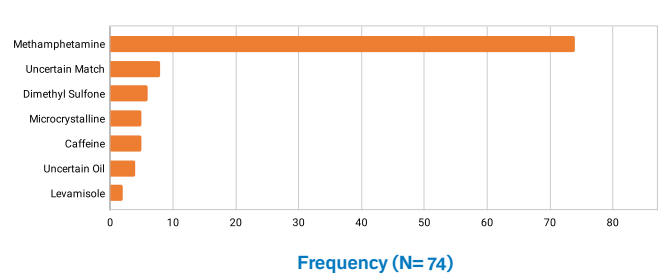
Components in cocaine



Other components found in opioids

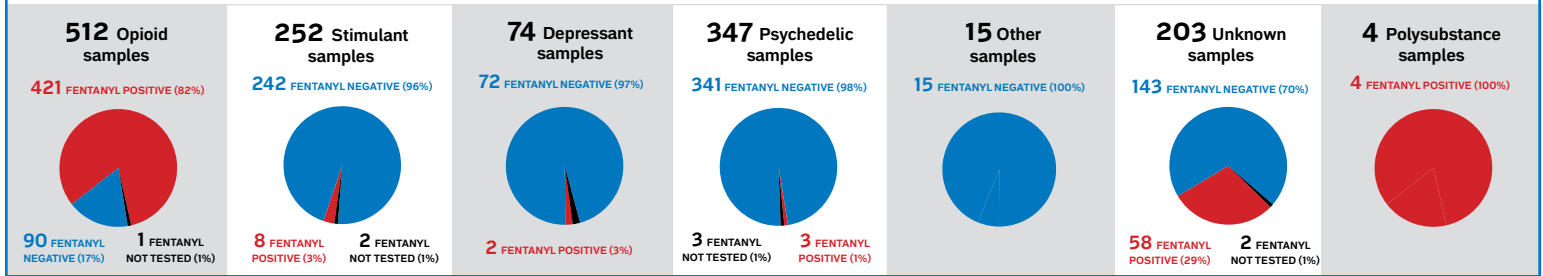


Components in methamphetamine



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



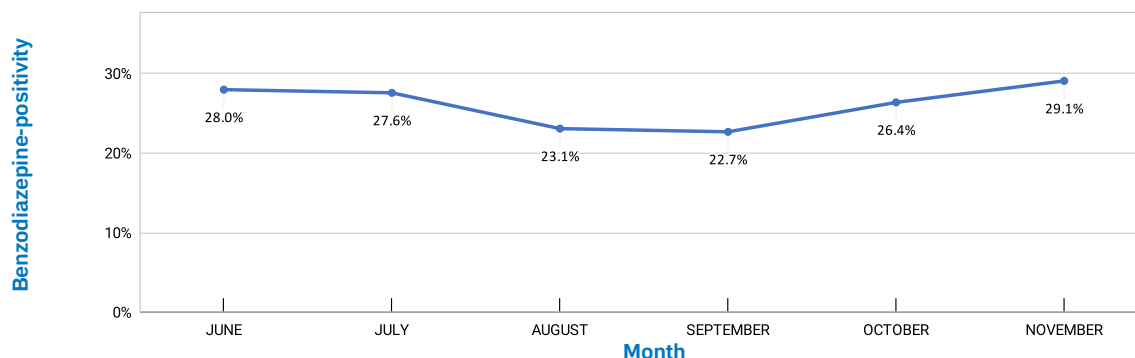
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
November 7, 2022 Vancouver	Down	Fentanyl, Caffeine, Erythritol, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	High concentrations of fentanyl and benzodiazepines poses high risk of overdose.
November 9, 2022 Vancouver	Down	Caffeine, Fentanyl, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Sample contains high concentration of both fentanyl and a benzodiazepine, posing risk of complex overdose.
November 14, 2022 Vancouver	Alprazolam (Xanax)	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Uncertain Mineral, Fentanyl	Positive	Negative	Vancouver	Sample unexpectedly contained fentanyl instead of benzodiazepines. Consuming fentanyl unknowingly can lead to overdose.
November 17, 2022 Vancouver	Unknown	Xylitol, Carfentanil	Positive	Negative	Vancouver	Carfentanil is an extremely potent fentanyl analogue, posing high risk of overdose. We are waiting for confirmatory results to further investigate this instance.
November 28, 2022 Vancouver	Oxycodone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Fentanyl or analogue	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Sample unexpectedly contains a fentanyl analogue and benzodiazepines, posing risk of complex 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 November, **29.1%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**149 samples of 512 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

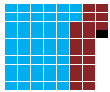
Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested	1,133
Insite	236
Molson OPS	38
Total	1,407

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG: Depressant

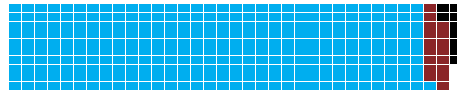
74 Samples Tested



Matched: 52
Did not match: 21
Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG: Psychedelic

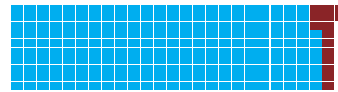
347 Samples Tested



Matched: 321
Did not match: 17
Match not determined: 9

EXPECTED DRUG: Stimulant

252 Samples Tested



Matched: 237
Did not match: 15

EXPECTED DRUG: Polysubstance

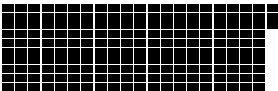
4 Samples Tested



Matched: 3
Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG: Unknown

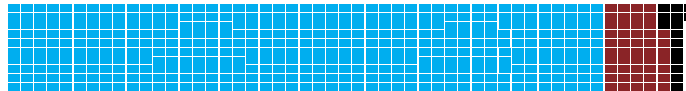
203 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 203

EXPECTED DRUG: Opioid

512 Samples Tested



Matched: 450
Did not match: 47
Match not determined: 15

EXPECTED DRUG: Other

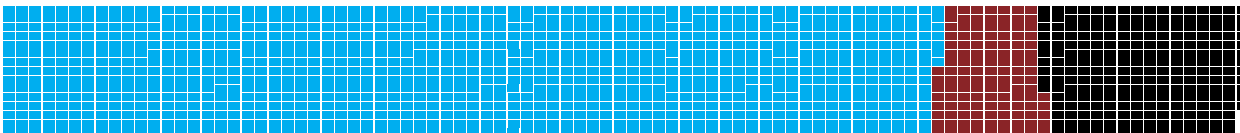
15 Sample Tested



Matched: 9
Did not match: 2
Match not determined: 4

Total

1,407 Samples Tested



Matched: 1,072
Did not match: 103
Match not determined: 232

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.

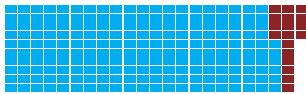
Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Fentanyl

224 Samples Tested



Matched: 206
Did not match: 18

EXPECTED DRUG:

Heroin

17 Samples Tested

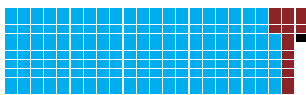


Matched: 14
Did not match: 3

EXPECTED DRUG:

Down

224 Samples Tested



Matched: 207
Did not match: 16
Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Pharmaceutical

38 Samples Tested



Matched: 15
Did not match: 9
Match not determined: 14

EXPECTED DRUG:

Opium

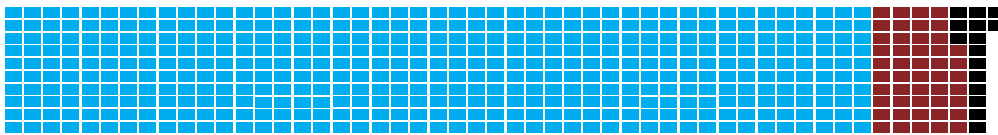
9 Samples Tested



Matched: 8
Did not match: 1

Total

512 Samples Tested



Matched: 450
Did not match: 47
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:

