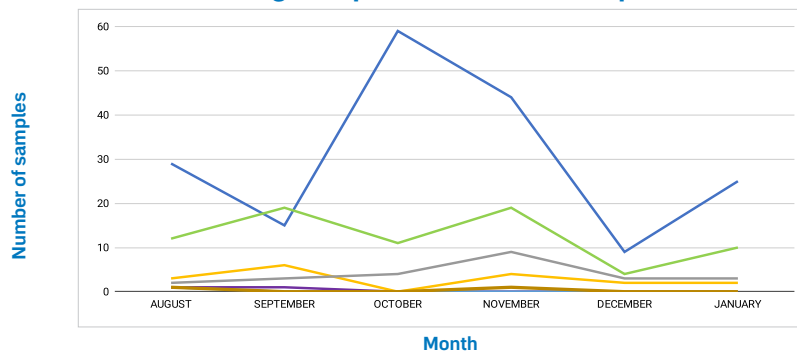


Key Findings

- In January, a total of 40 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Northern Health region.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines increased from 77.8% to 84.0% in January (21 of 25 samples). Trends may be hard to infer due to the small number of samples over a large region.
- Northern Health issued one drug alert concerning a down sample that contained no detectable opioids, but instead contained high concentrations of xylazine and bromazolam.
- 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



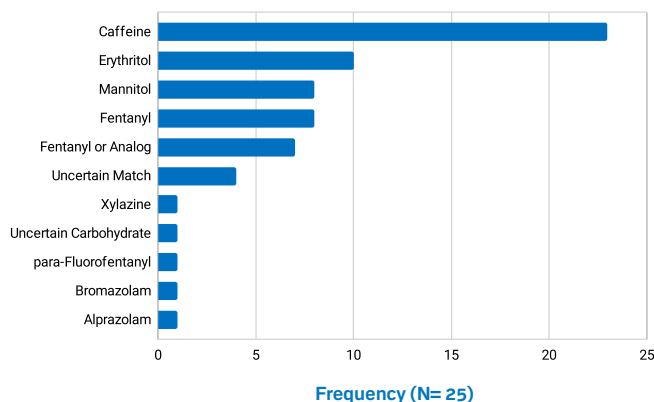
Number of samples by drug category in January

Opioid	25
Stimulant	10
Depressant	0
Psychedelic	2
Other	0
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	3

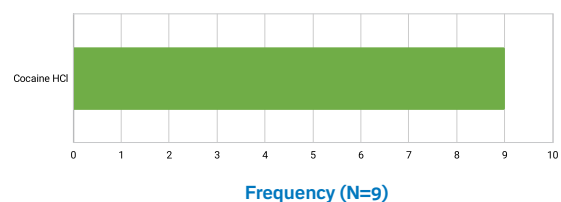
TOTAL: 40

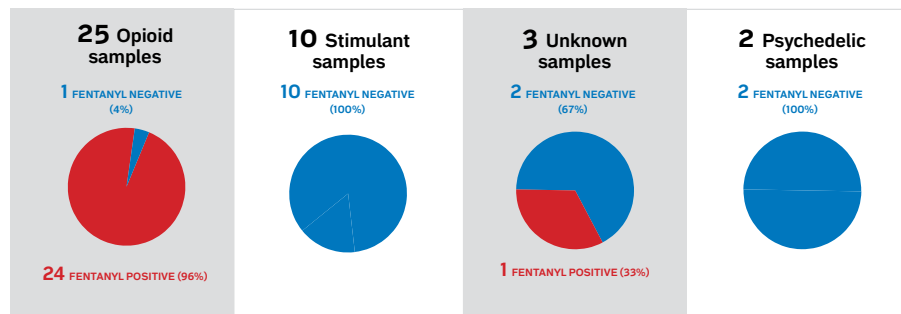
Components found in drug samples in January

Components in opioids



Components in cocaine



Number of samples tested with **fentanyl** present

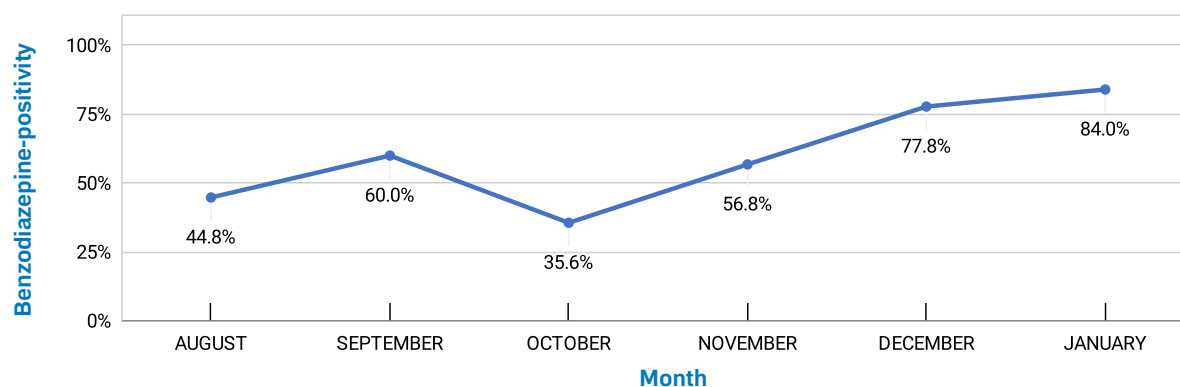
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
January 16, 2023 Prince George	Down	Xylazine, Bromazolam, Caffeine	Negative	Positive	Prince George	High concentration of xylazine and a benzodiazepine poses risk of overdose. Sample has been associated with causing OD and heavy sedation
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.						

Number of drugs checks at each site

Location	# of drug checks
POUNDS (Prince George)	20
Northwest ICMT (Terrace)	20
TOTAL	40

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



During the month of January, **84.0%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Northern Health (**21 samples of 25 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.

January
2023

Drug Checking in Northern Health

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

EXPECTED DRUG:

Opioid

25 Samples Tested



Matched: 24

Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Stimulant

10 Samples Tested



Matched: 10

EXPECTED DRUG:

Psychedelic

2 Samples Tested



Matched: 2

EXPECTED DRUG:

Unknown

3 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 3

Total

40 Samples Tested



Matched: 36

Did not match: 1

Match not determined: 3

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

EXPECTED DRUG:

Down

25 Samples Tested



Matched: 24

Did not match: 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:

