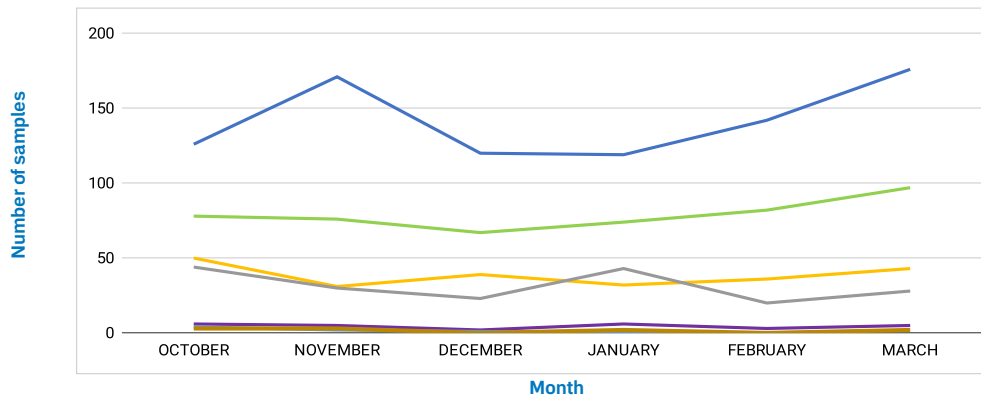


Key Findings

- In March, a total of 351 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Interior Health region.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines decreased from 83.1% to 71.6% in March (126 of 176 samples). Trends may be hard to infer due to the large geographic region.
- Three drug alerts were issued by Interior Health. One pertained to a sample that had been sold as crack cocaine, but instead contained high concentrations of fentanyl, bromazolam, and xylazine.
- Drug checking is available in several communities across the Interior Health region. For updated times and locations, visit <https://drugchecking.ca/>

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



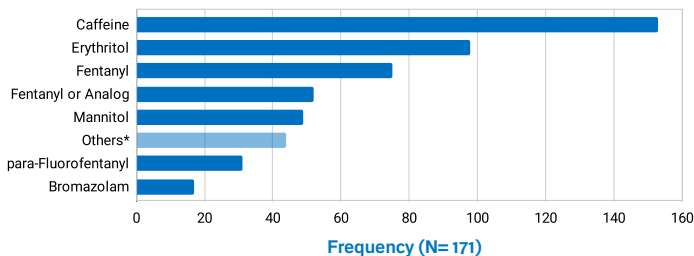
Number of samples by drug category in March

Opioid	176
Stimulant	97
Depressant	5
Psychotic	43
Other	0
Polysubstance	2
Unknown	28

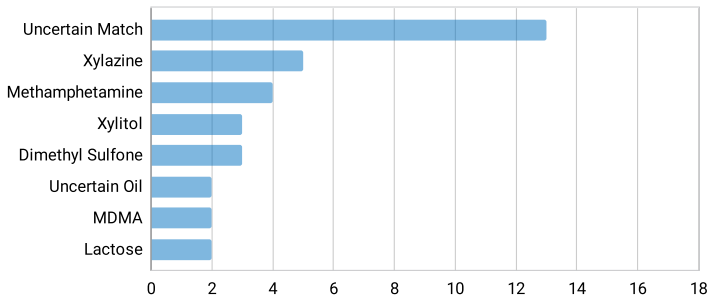
TOTAL: 351

Components found in drug samples in March

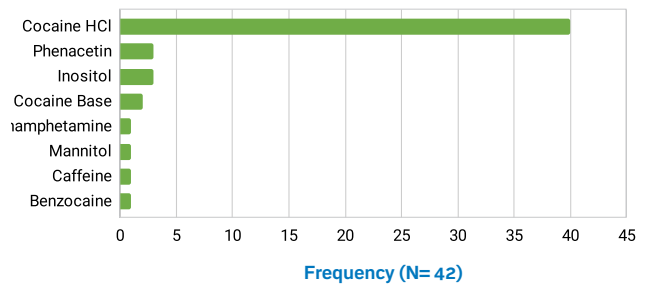
Components in opioids



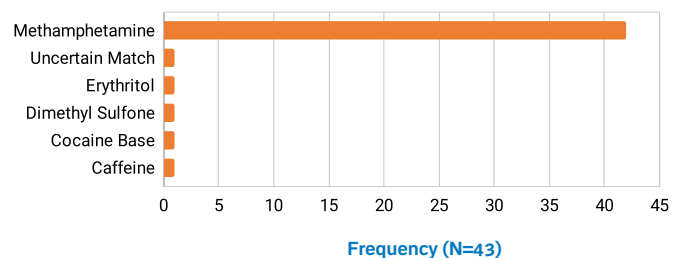
Other components in opioids



Components in cocaine

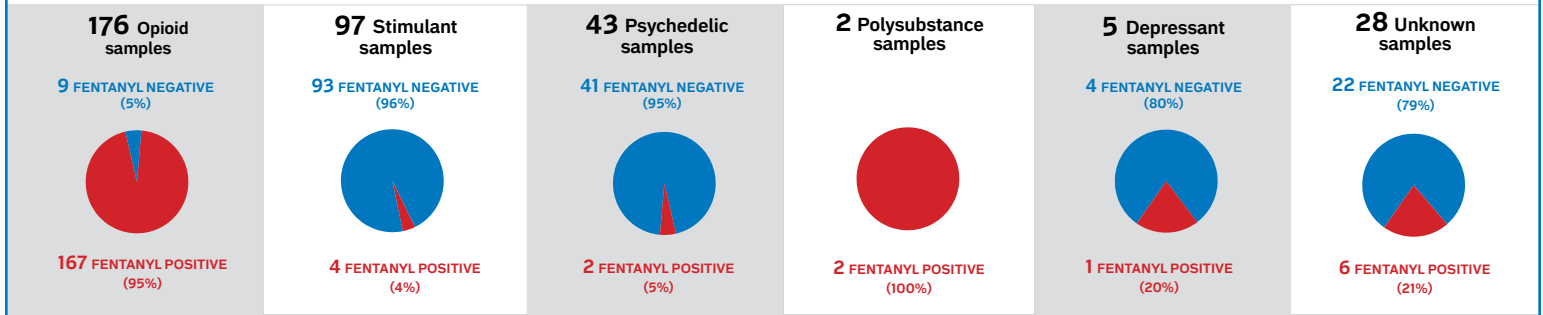


Components in methamphetamine



Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: 6-MAM, alprazolam, cocaine base, cocaine, desalkylgizapam, etizolam, heroin, inositol, uncertain carbohydrate, vitamin C.

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



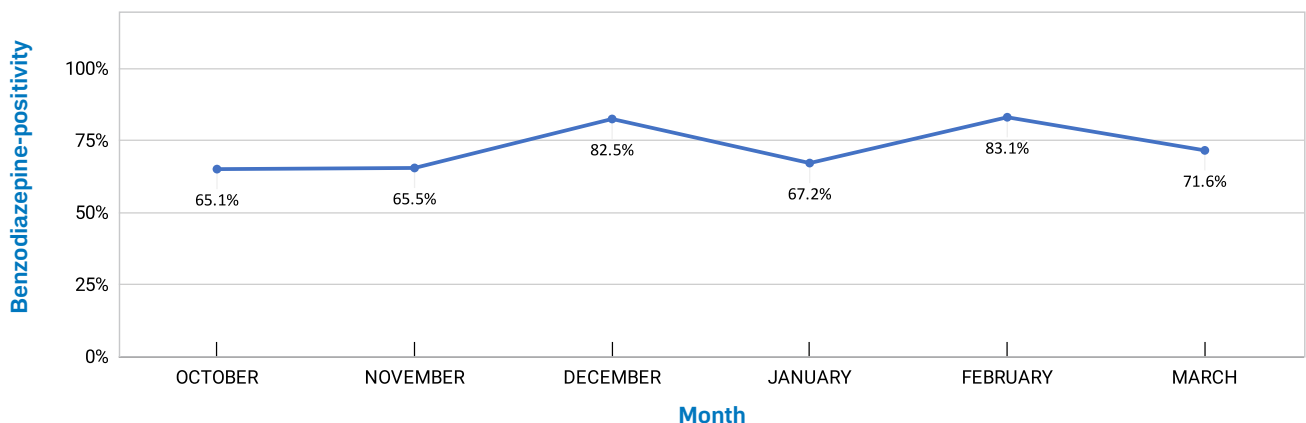
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
March 27, 2023 Penticton	Down	Fentanyl, Erythritol, Caffeine, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	Penticton	High concentration of fentanyl and bromazolam (benzodiazepine) poses high risk of overdose.
March 30, 2023 Vernon	Crack Cocaine	Fentanyl, Bromazolam, Xylazine	Positive	Positive	Vernon	Sample sold as a stimulant instead contained high concentrations of fentanyl, bromazolam, and xylazine, posing high risk of overdose. Sample is believed to be associated with multiple drug toxicity events.
March 31, 2023 Penticton	Down	Para-fluorofentanyl	Positive	Negative	Penticton	Sample sold as down (typically a diluted mixture), tested as undiluted or "uncut" para-fluorofentanyl, posing high risk of 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.

For information about public health alerts in the Interior Health region, please visit:
<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/alerts>

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the past 6 months



During the month of March, **71.6%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Interior Health (**126 samples of 176 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 at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
ANKORS (Castlegar)	8
ANKORS (Cranbrook)	85
ANKORS (Grand Forks)	5
ANKORS (Nelson)	73
ANKORS (Trail)	21
ASK Wellness (Kamloops)	8

Location	# of Drugs Checked
ASK Wellness (Merritt)	4
ASK Wellness (Penticton)	47
UBCO HaRT (Kelowna)	76
UBCO HaRT (Vernon)	24
Total	351

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid 	170	6	0	176
Stimulant 	90	7	0	97
Depressant 	4	1	0	5
Psychedelic 	36	7	0	43
Polysubstance 	2	0	0	2
Unknown 	0	0	28	28
Total 	302	21	28	351

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	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Fentanyl	77	1	0	78
Heroin	1	1	0	2
Other Opioid	1	0	0	1
Down	87	3	0	90
Pharmaceutical	4	1	0	5
Total	170	6	0	176

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: