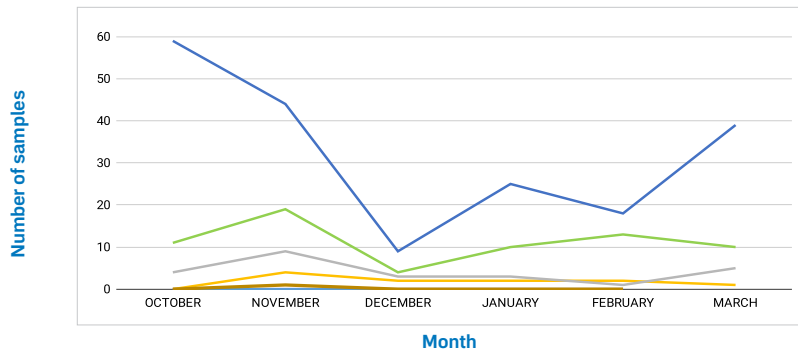


Key Findings

- In March, a total of 55 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Northern Health region.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines decreased from 55.6% to 41.0% in March (16 of 39 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 high concentrations of fentanyl with benzodiazepines present.
- 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



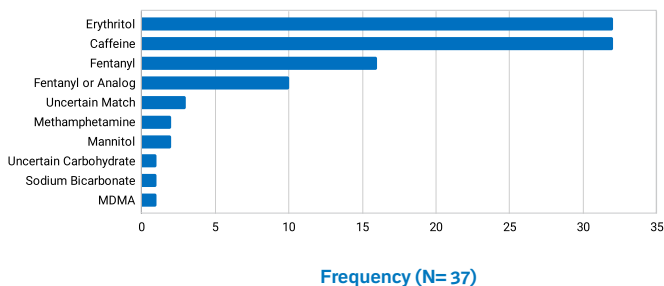
Number of samples by drug category in March

Opioid	39
Stimulant	10
Depressant	0
Psychedelic	1
Other	0
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	5

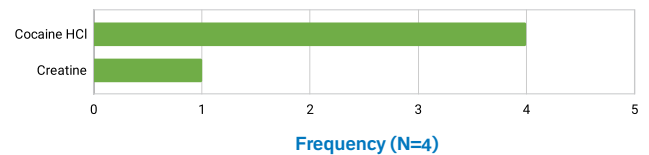
TOTAL: 55

Components found in drug samples in March

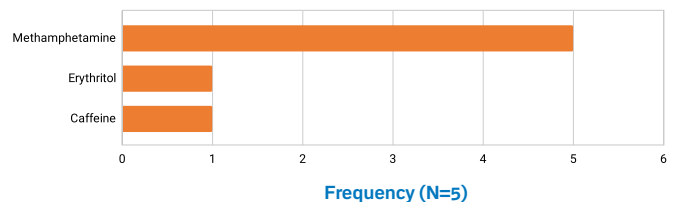
Components in opioids



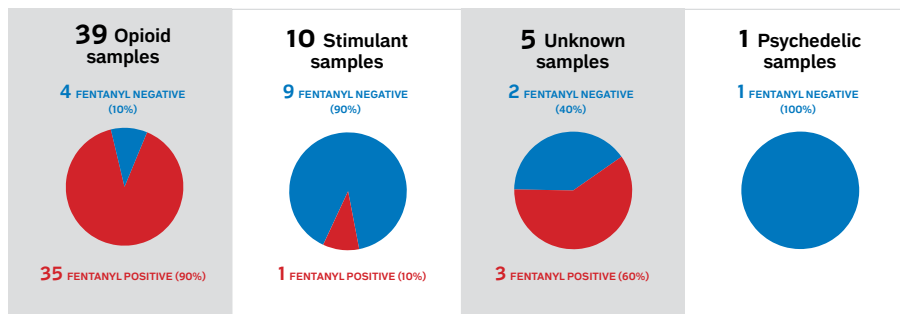
Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

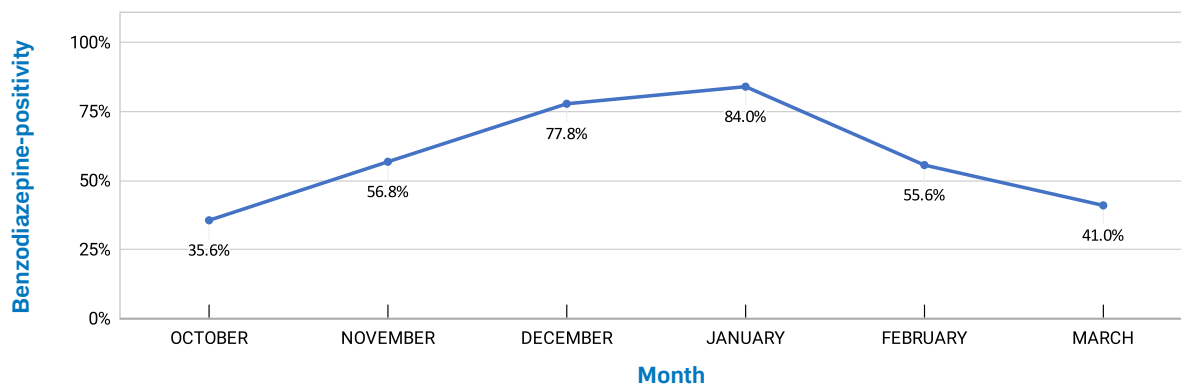
Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
March 21, 2023 Prince George	Down	Erythritol, Fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Prince George	High concentration of fentanyl and presence of benzodiazepines increases risk of overdose. Sample associated with prolonged sedation and breathing difficulties.

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
Mobile ICMT (Terrace)	2
Northwest ICMT (Terrace)	15
POUNDS (Prince George)	38
TOTAL	55

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



During the month of March, **41.0%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Northern Health (**16 samples of 39 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	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	36	3	0	39
Stimulant	10	0	0	10
Psychedelic	1	0	0	1
Unknown	0	0	5	5
Total	47	3	5	55

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

EXPECTED DRUG	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Fentanyl	2	0	0	2
Down	32	3	0	35
Fentanyl	2	0	0	2
Total	36	3	0	39

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:

