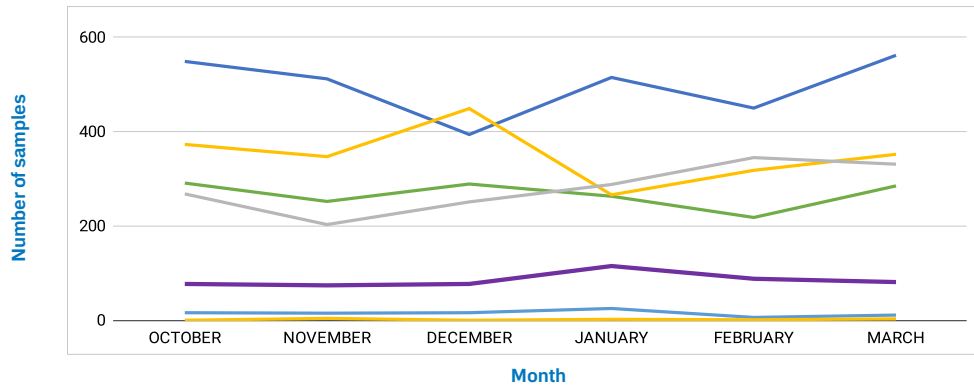


Key Findings

- In March, a total of 1,625 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Vancouver Coastal region.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines decreased from 31.6% to 29.9% in March (168 of 562 samples), continuing a downward trend since December.
- One drug alert was issued by Vancouver Coastal concerning a down sample containing a high concentration of para-fluorofentanyl with benzodiazepines present.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



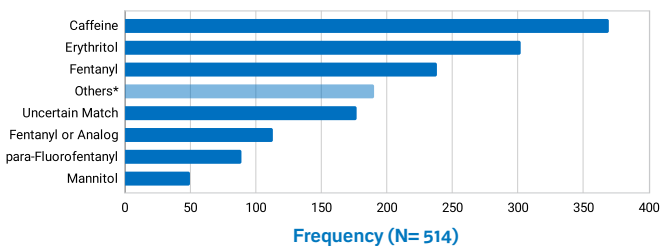
Number of samples by drug category in March

Opioid	562
Stimulant	285
Depressant	81
Psychedelic	352
Other	11
Polysubstance	3
Unknown	331

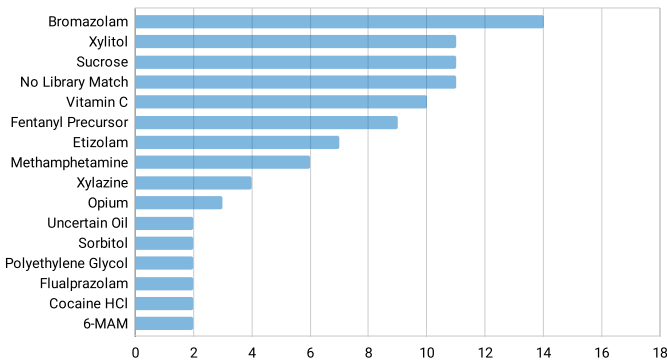
TOTAL: 1,625

Components found in drug samples in March

Components in opioids

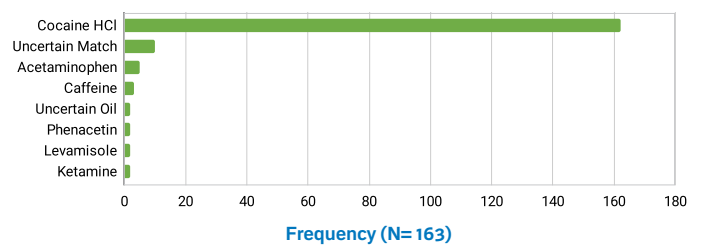


Other components found in opioids



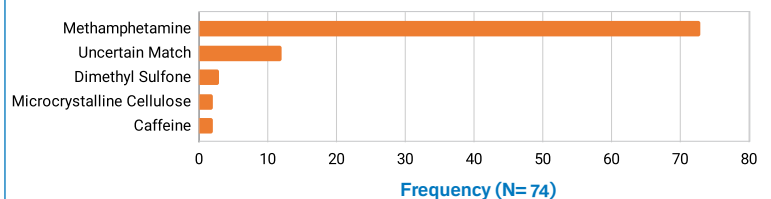
Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: bromazepam, cocaine base, desalkylgizapem, diclazepam, fentanyl citrate, glucose, lactose, phenacetin, polystyrene, uncertain mineral.

Components in cocaine



Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: benzocaine, creatine, glutamine, inositol, mannitol, MDMA.

Components in methamphetamine

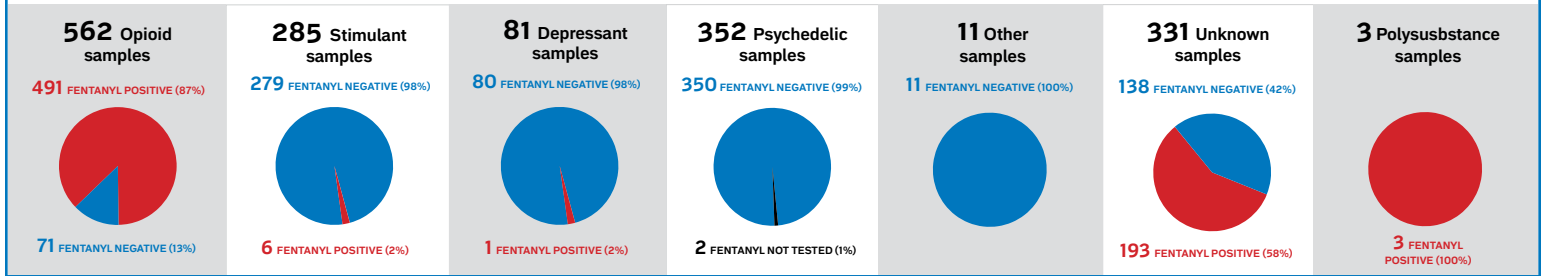


Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: erythritol, fentanyl or analogue, MDA, uncertain oil.

March
2023

Drug Checking in Vancouver Coastal

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



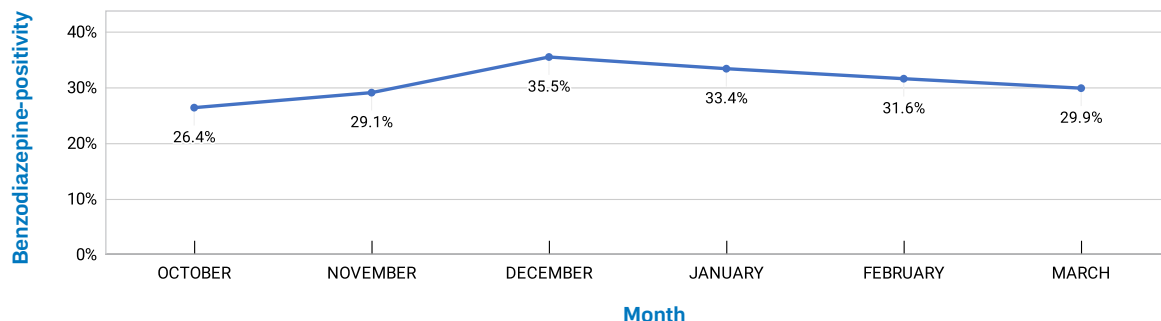
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
March 8, 2023 Vancouver	Down	Caffeine, Para-Fluorofentanyl, Mannitol	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	High concentration of para-fluorofentanyl and presence of benzodiazepines increases risk of overdose. Sample is believed to be associated with multiple overdoses.

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 March, **29.9%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**168 samples of 562 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	1,423
Insite	173
Molson OPS	15
Overdose Prevention Society	14
Total	1,625

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	513	33	16	562
Stimulant	275	8	2	285
Depressant	60	19	2	81
Psychedelic	318	28	6	352
Other	6	0	5	11
Polysubstance	3	0	0	3
Unknown	0	0	331	331
Total	1,175	88	362	1,625

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	229	5	0	234
Heroin	9	4	0	13
Other Opioid	0	1	0	1
Down	252	9	0	261
Pharmaceutical	18	14	16	48
Opium	5	0	0	5
Total	513	33	16	562

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:

