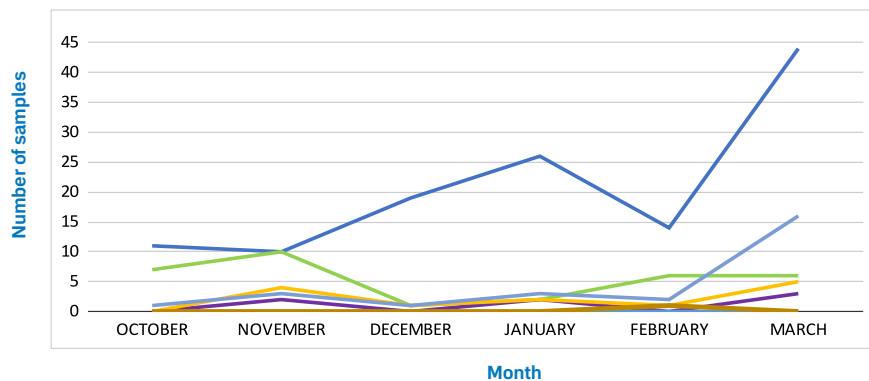


Key Findings

- In March, a total of 74 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Northern Health region, more than three times the number of samples checked the previous month.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and test strip decreased from 92.9% to 65.9% in March (29 of 44 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were found in concentrations high enough to be detected by FTIR in 14.3% of unregulated opioids (6 of 42 samples), with bromazolam most frequently detected (5 samples).
- Fluorofentanyl was detected by FTIR in 31.0% of unregulated opioids (13 of 42 samples), whereas fentanyl was detected in 11.9% (5 samples).
- Ortho-Methylfentanyl has recently emerged in the drug supply, and was found in 4.5% of unregulated opioids (6 of 134 samples).
- Trends are hard to infer due to the small number of samples over a large region.
- Drug checking services with FTIR and test strips are now available in the Northern Health Region. For updated times and locations, please visit the [Northern Health website](#).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



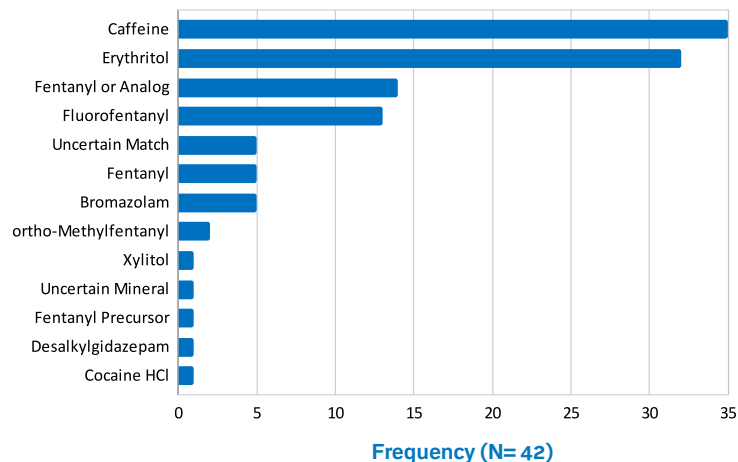
Number of samples by drug category in March

Opioid	44
Stimulant	6
Depressant	3
Psychedelic	5
Other	0
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	16

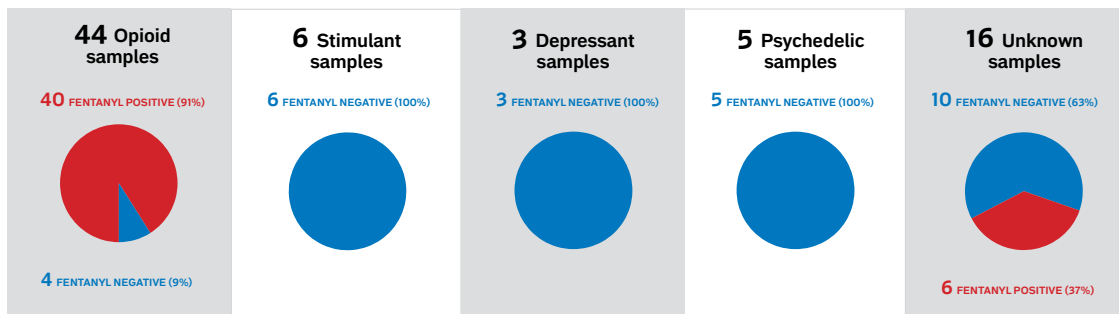
TOTAL: 74

Components found in drug samples in March

Components in unregulated opioids



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



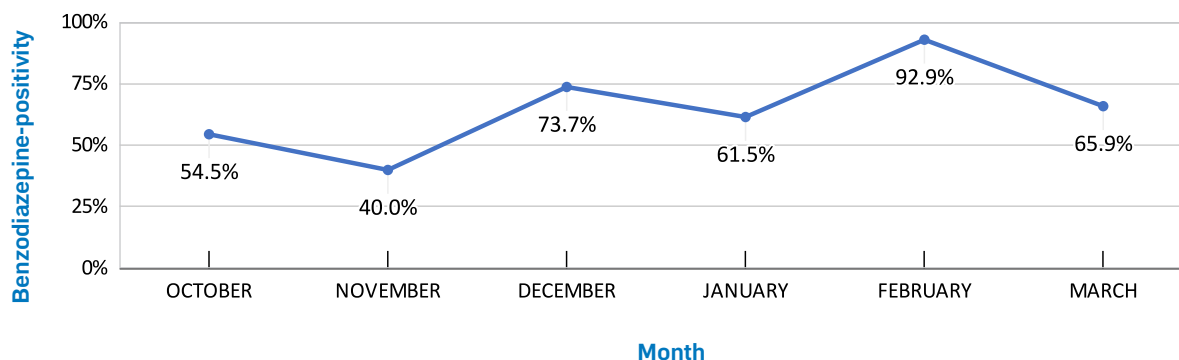
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
No alerts for Northern Health this month.						

Number of drugs checks at each site

Location	# of drug checks
POUNDS (Prince George)	48
POUNDS (Quesnel)	12
POUNDS (Terrace)	14
Total	74

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



During the month of March, **65.9%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Northern Health (**29 samples of 44 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 samples with expected drug present using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Present	Not Present	Presence Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	39	4	1	44
Stimulant	5	1	0	6
Depressant	3	0	0	3
Psychedelic	4	1	0	5
Unknown	0	0	16	16
Total	51	6	17	74

Number of opioid samples with expected drug present using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Present	Not Present	Presence Not Determined	Samples Tested
Down	39	2	1	42
Pharmaceutical	0	2	0	2
Total	39	4	1	44

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
(unregulated opioids), and
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:

