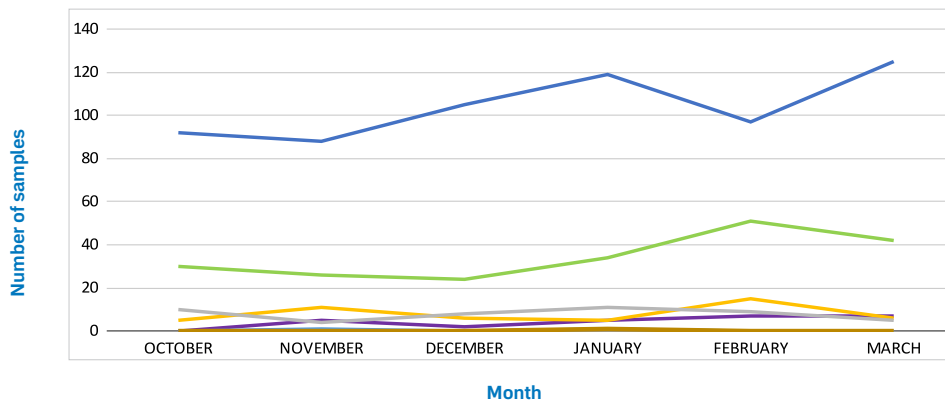


Key Findings

- In March, a total of 185 drug checks were performed at the CMHA Mid-Island Albert Street site in Nanaimo.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and test strip decreased from 86.6% to 68.0% March (85 of 125 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were found in concentrations high enough to be detected by FTIR in 9.1% of unregulated opioids (11 of 121 samples), with bromazolam most frequently identified (9 samples).
- Fluorofentanyl was detected by FTIR in 15.7% of unregulated opioids (19 of 121 samples), whereas fentanyl was detected in 45.5% (55 samples).
- Xylazine was detected by FTIR in 0.8% of unregulated opioids checked (1 of 121 samples).
- Drug checking services are now operating 7 days a week from 11:00am–8:30pm at 250 Albert Street, Nanaimo. Samples can also be dropped off any day of the week and results can be picked up during drug checking hours.
- Substance (The Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project), offers drug checking in Victoria and communities across the Island. For more information about drug checking sample results in the Island health region, please visit substance.uvic.ca.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



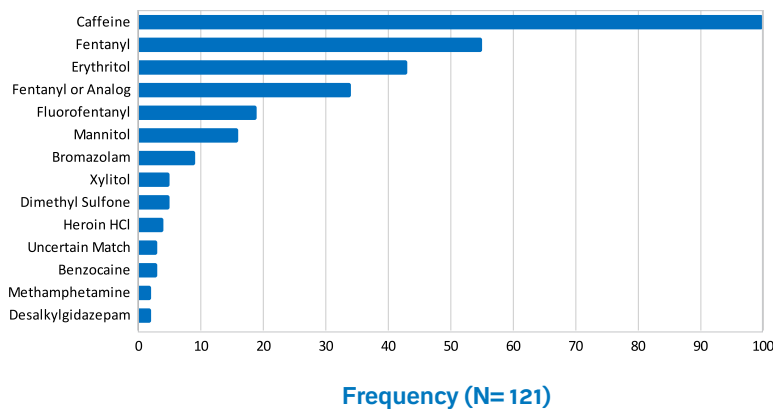
Number of samples by drug category in March

Opioid	125
Stimulant	42
Depressant	7
Psychedelic	6
Other	0
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	5

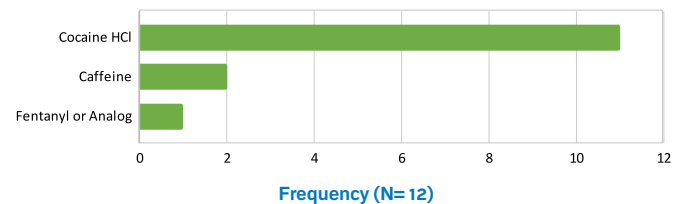
TOTAL: 185

Components found in drug samples in March

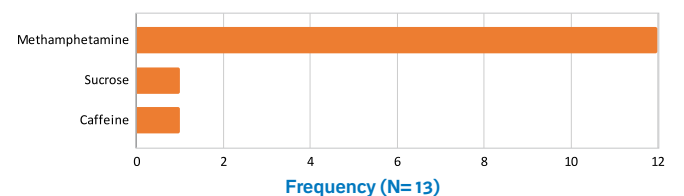
Components in unregulated opioids



Components in cocaine



Components in Methamphetamine

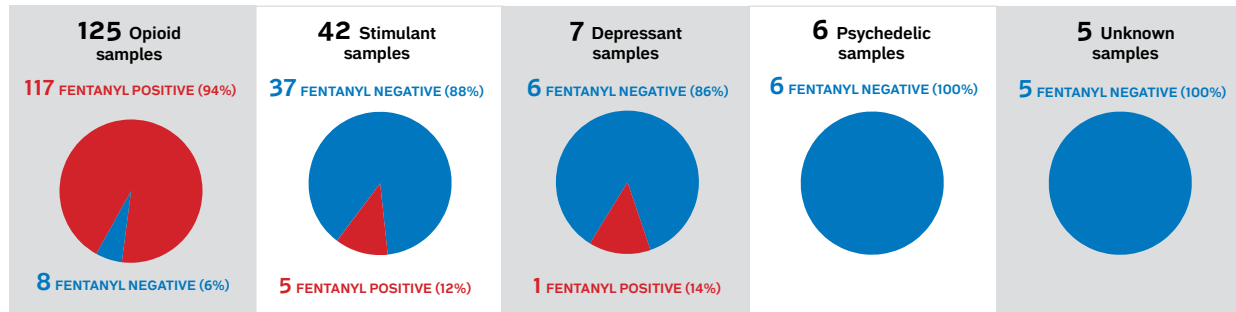


Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: dextrose, fentanyl citrate, MAPA, microcrystalline cellulose, uncertain carbohydrate, xylazine.

March
2024

Drug Checking in Island Health

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

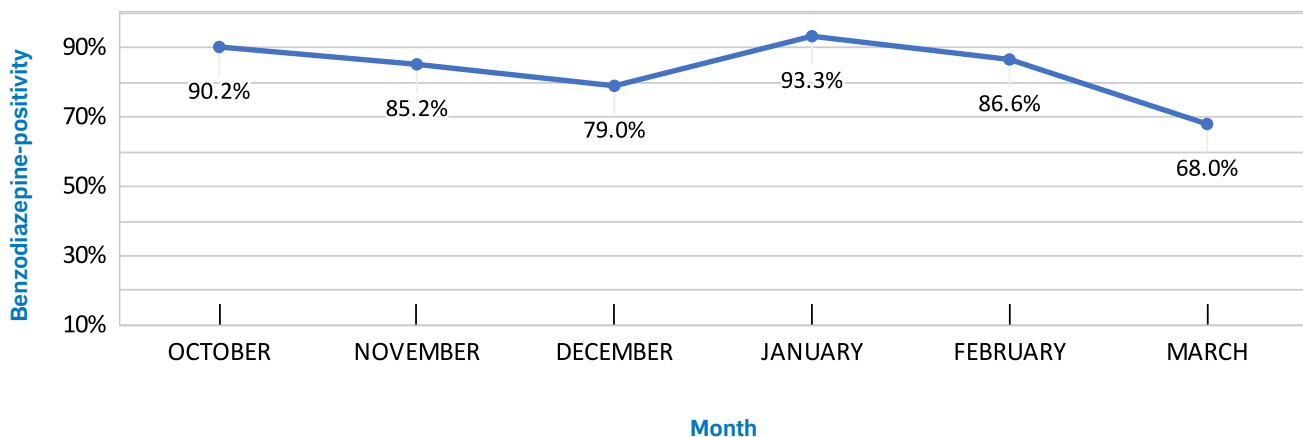


PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
No alerts from drugs checked at Albert St. Drug Checking service this month					

For information about current substances in the Island Health region: <https://substance.uvic.ca/>

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



During the month of March, **68.0%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Island Health (**85 samples of 125 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 Drug Checks
Albert St. OPS (CMHA Nanaimo)	185

Number of samples with expected drug present

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Present	Not Present	Presence Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	114	10	1	125
Stimulant	38	3	1	42
Depressant	4	3	0	7
Psychedelic	6	0	0	6
Unknown	0	0	5	5
Total	162	16	7	185

Number of opioid samples with expected drug present

*using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Present	Not Present	Presence Not Determined	Samples Tested
Fentanyl	24	1	0	25
Heroin	1	4	0	5
Down	87	4	0	91
Pharmaceutical	2	1	1	4
Total	114	10	1	125

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: