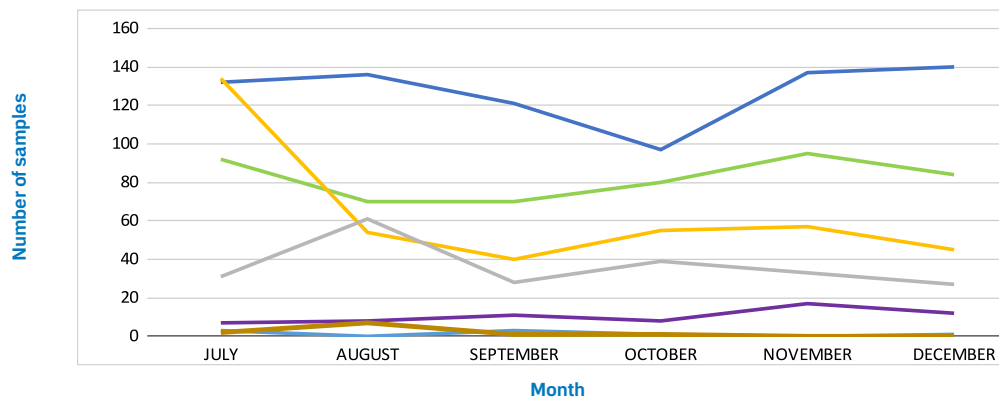


Key Findings

- In December, a total of 309 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Interior Health region.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and test strip increased from 65.0% to 70.7% in December (99 of 140 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were found in concentrations high enough to be detected by FTIR in 18.4% of unregulated opioids (25 of 136 samples), with bromazolam most frequently detected (24 samples).
- Fluorofentanyl was detected by FTIR in 26.5% of unregulated opioids (36 of 136 samples), whereas fentanyl was detected in 36.0% (49 samples).
- Xylazine was detected by FTIR in 2.9% of unregulated opioid samples (4 of 136 samples).
- Drug checking is available in several communities across the Interior Health region. The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy offers drug checking services in Vernon at #100-3605 31st Street. For updated times and locations in Interior Health, visit <https://drugchecking.ca/>

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



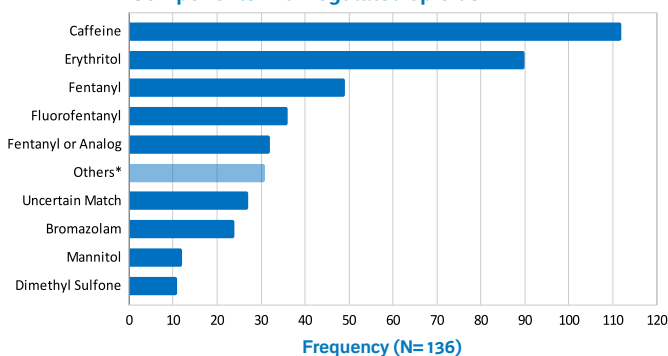
Number of samples by drug category in December

Opioid	140
Stimulant	84
Depressant	12
Psychedelic	45
Other	1
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	27

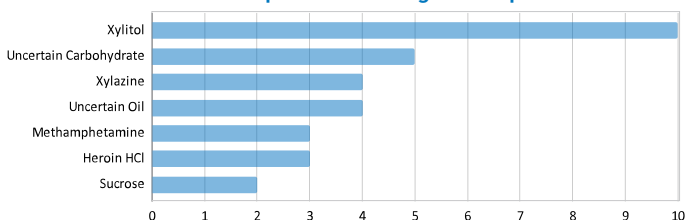
TOTAL: 309

Components found in drug samples in December

Components in unregulated opioids

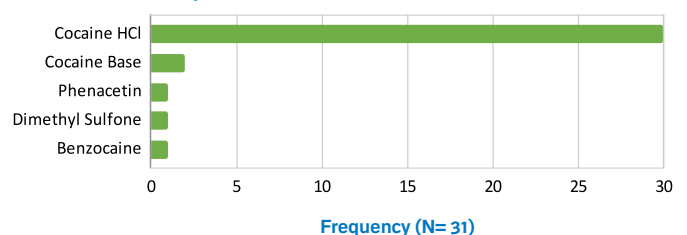


*Other components in unregulated opioids

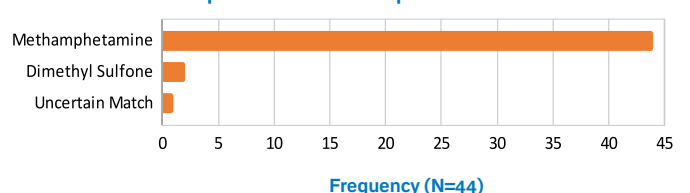


Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: 6-MAM, Calcium Carbonate, Deschloroetizolam, Lactose, Metamizole, Microcrystalline Cellulose, Phenacetin

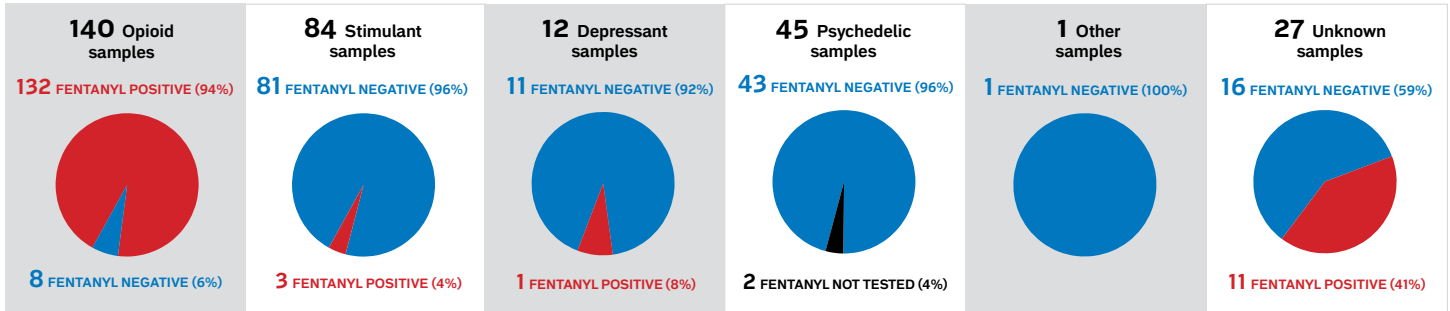
Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	FTIR Spectroscopy Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
December 18, 2023 Nelson	Down	Caffeine, Fentanyl, Erythritol, Xylazine, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	Pink chunks sold as down tested positive for high amounts of fentanyl (25%), bromazolam (17%), and xylazine (11%) in Nelson*
December 21, 2023 Cranbrook	Down	Caffeine, Fentanyl, Erythritol, Xylazine, Uncertain Match	Positive	Positive	Pink chunks sold as down tested positive for high amounts of fentanyl (27%), bromazolam (17%), and xylazine (26%) in Cranbrook*

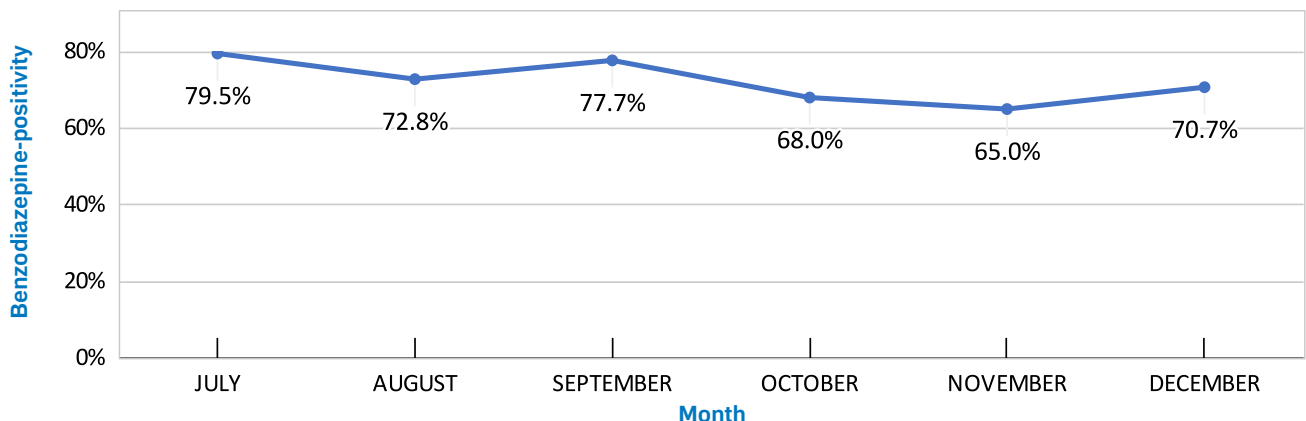
*Quantitative results provided by complementary testing partner Substance using Paper Spray Mass Spectrometry, all other spectroscopy results are determined by FTIR.

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 December, **70.7%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Interior Health (**99 samples of 140 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 (Cranbrook)	45
ANKORS (Grand Forks)	17
ANKORS (Nelson)	64
ANKORS (Trail)	15
ASK Wellness (Kamloops)	25
ASK Wellness (Penticton)	30
Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy (Vernon)	12
UBCO HaRT (Kelowna)	101
Total:	309

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	135	4	1	140
Stimulant	84	0	0	84
Depressant	10	1	1	12
Psychedelic	42	3	0	45
Other	1	0	0	1
Unknown	0	0	27	27
Total	272	8	29	309

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.

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 	36	0	0	36
Heroin 	2	0	0	2
Down 	95	3	0	98
Pharmaceutical 	1	1	1	3
Opium 	1	0	0	1
Total 	135	4	1	140

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:

