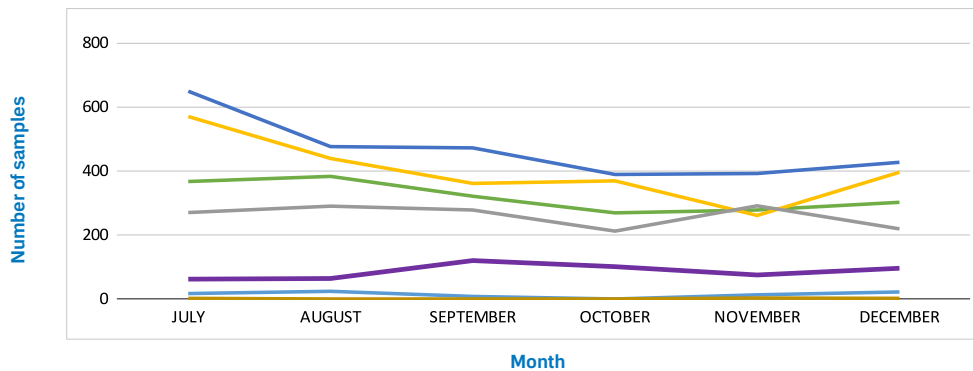


Key Findings

- In December, a total of 1,471 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Vancouver Coastal region.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and test strip decreased from 34.4% to 31.3% in December (134 of 428 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were found in concentrations high enough to be detected by FTIR in 8.8% of unregulated opioids checked (33 of 376 samples), with bromazolam most frequently detected (31 samples).
- Fluorofentanyl was detected in 20.5% of unregulated opioids (77 of 376 samples), whereas fentanyl was detected in 46.8% (176 samples).
- Xylazine was detected in 2.1% of unregulated opioids (8 of 376 samples).
- Drug checking services are now available at Whistler Community Services Society (8000 Nesters Rd, Whistler), LIFT Community Services (4752 Joyce Ave, Powell River), and at the Tla'amin Health Centre (5160 Highway 101, Powell River).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



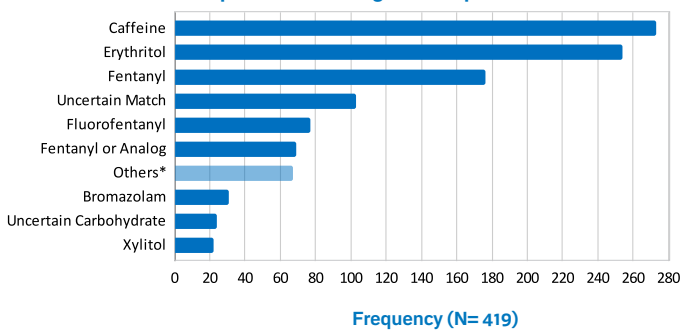
Number of samples by drug category in December

Opioid	428
Stimulant	303
Depressant	97
Psychedelic	397
Other	23
Polysubstance	3
Unknown	220

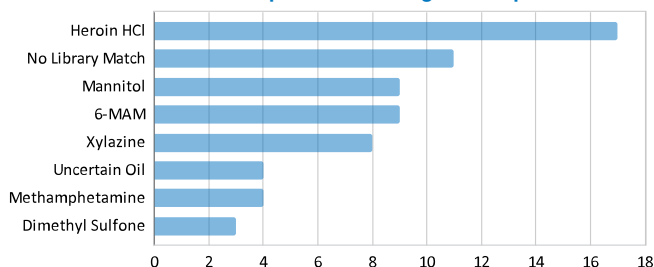
TOTAL: 1,471

Components found in drug samples in December

Components in unregulated opioids

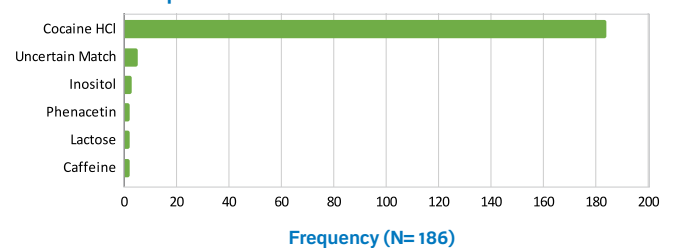


Other components in unregulated opioids



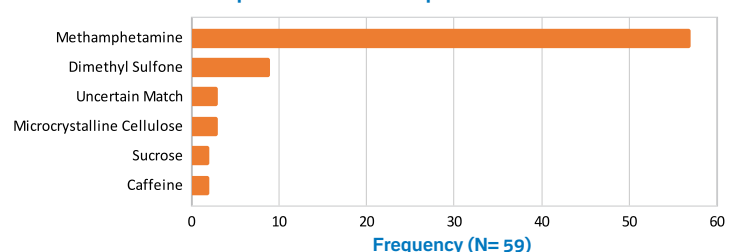
Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: Cocaine Base, Desalkylgizapem, Etizolam, Fentanyl Precursor, Flualprazolam, Glutamine, Microcrystalline Cellulose, Microcrystalline Cellulose, Sucrose

Components in cocaine



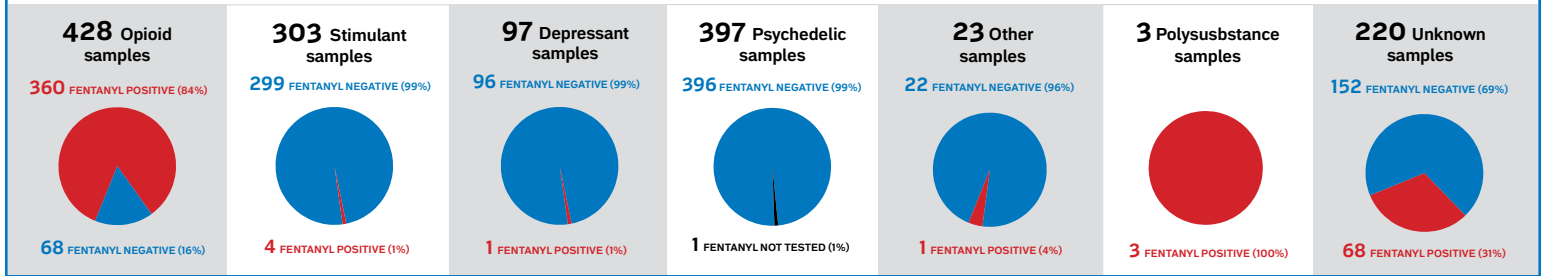
Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: Cocaine Base, Mannitol, Methamphetamine, Sodium Bicarbonate

Components in methamphetamine



Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: Cocaine Base, Ketamine

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



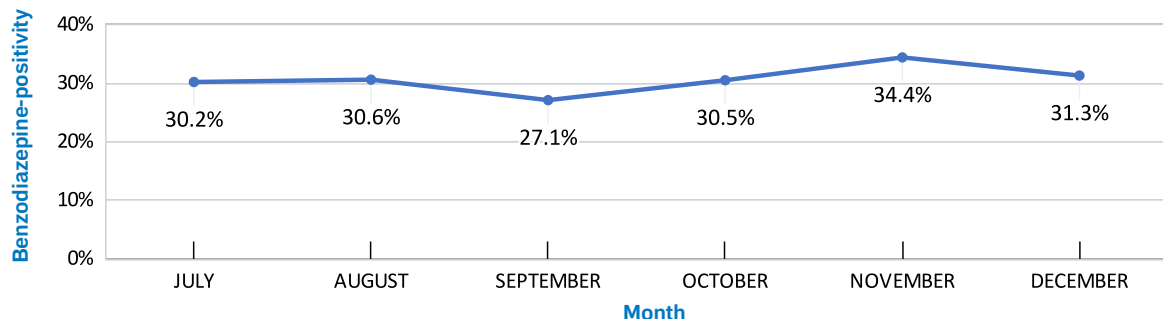
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
December 4, 2023 Vancouver	Down	Caffeine, Fentanyl, Xylazine	Positive	Positive	Blue granules sold as down in the DTES of Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl, xylazine, and benzos
December 5, 2023 Sechelt	Down	Caffeine, Erythritol, Xylazine, Fentanyl or Analog	Positive	Positive	Dark orange pebbles from Schelt tested positive for fentanyl, xylazine, and benzos
December 21, 2023 Vancouver	Oxycodone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, AMB-FUBINACA, Uncertain Match, Uncertain Oil	Negative	Negative	Dark green granules sold as oxycodone in Vancouver tested positive for AMB-FUBINACA, a synthetic cannabinoid, and negative for oxycodone

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 December, **31.3%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**134 samples of 428 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
Get Your Drugs Tested (Vancouver)	1372
Insite (Vancouver)	23
LIFT Community Services (Powell River)	63
Tla'amin Nation (Powell River)	10
Total:	1471

Less than 5 samples were tested at the following location, which is included in the total: WCSS (Whistler)

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	386	35	7	428
Stimulant	296	7	0	303
Depressant	80	15	2	97
Psychedelic	365	21	11	397
Other	9	7	7	23
Polysubstance	3	0	0	3
Unknown	0	0	220	220
Total	1139	85	247	1471

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	98	2	0	100
Heroin	14	8	0	22
Down	248	6	0	254
Pharmaceutical	17	19	7	43
Opium	9	0	0	9
Total	386	35	7	428

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:

