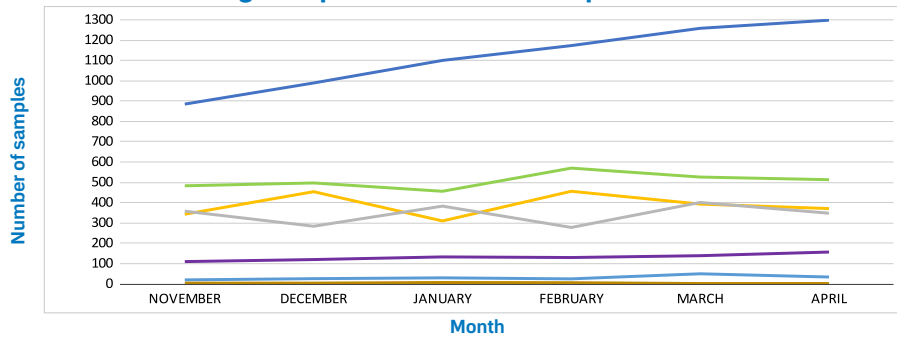


Key Findings

- In April, a total of 2,723 drug checks were performed at community drug checking sites offering FTIR services in BC (54 access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip decreased to 45.3% (588 of 1298 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were detected by FTIR in 12.6% of unregulated opioids (153 of 1218 samples), indicating their presence in higher concentrations.
- Multiple fentanyl analogues have been detected in unregulated opioids. The most recent to emerge, ortho-Methylfentanyl, was detected by FTIR in 8.9% of samples (108 of 1218). Fluorofentanyl was detected in 26.4% (321 samples).
- Xylazine detection by FTIR in unregulated opioid samples increased from 1.6% to 2.4% in April (29 of 1218 samples).
- The median fentanyl concentration of unregulated opioids was 16.8%, consistent with the previous month. See page 3 for more detailed results.
- The BCCSU Drug Checking Project website has recently been updated. To find drug checking services near you, please see our [site locator](#).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



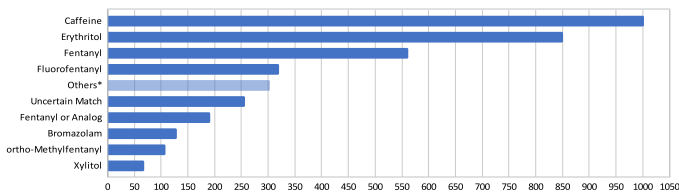
Number of samples by drug category in April

Opioid	1298
Stimulant	513
Depressant	157
Psychedelic	371
Other	34
Polysubstance	2
Unknown	348

TOTAL: 2,723

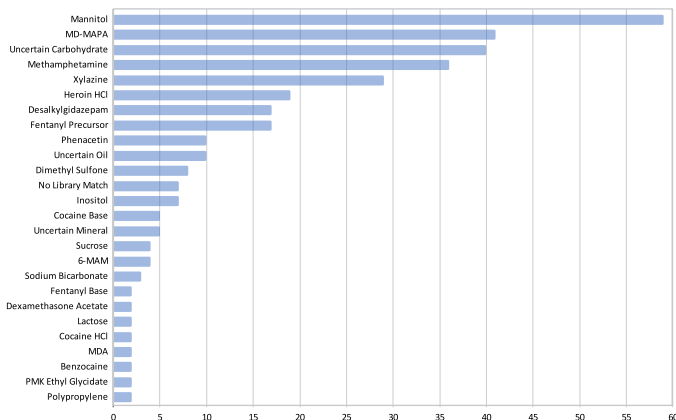
Components found in drug samples in April

Components in unregulated opioids

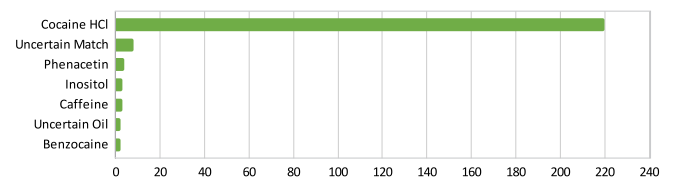


Frequency (N=1,218)

*Other components in unregulated opioids

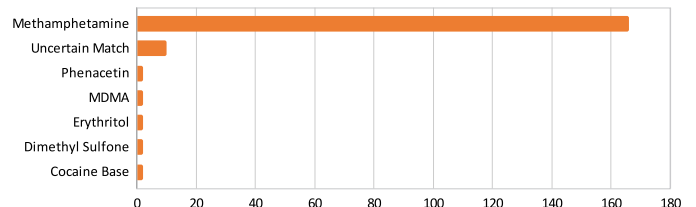


Components in cocaine



Frequency (N=223)

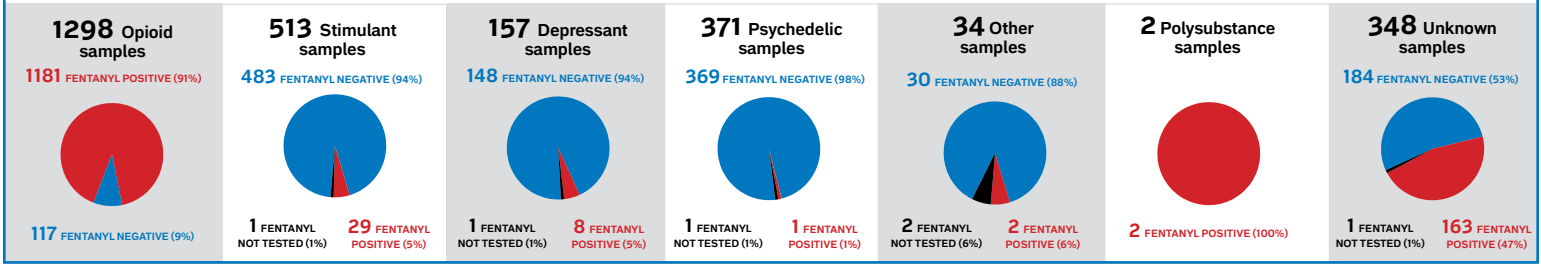
Components in methamphetamine



Frequency (N=172)

There were additional compounds detected a single time each. To save space, they have been omitted from these charts. For the full list of compounds detected, visit our data dashboard at www.drugcheckingbc.ca/dashboard/

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

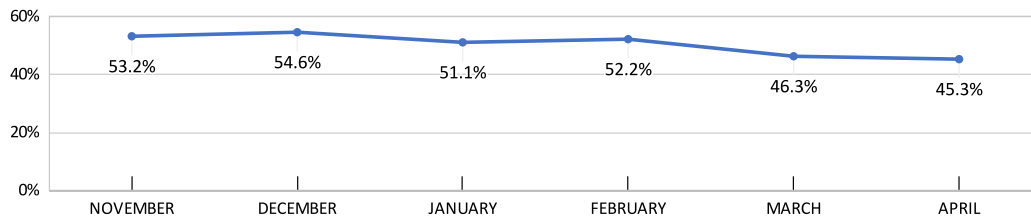
Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
April 8, 2024 Vancouver	Down	Xylazine, Ortho-Methylfentanyl, Deschloroetizolam, Uncertain Oil	Positive	Negative*	Brown pebbles sold as down in Vancouver tested positive for xylazine, fentanyl analog ortho-methylfentanyl, and benzo analog deschloroetizolam.
April 8, 2024 Vancouver	Oxycodone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Acetaminophen, Calcium Stearate	Positive	Positive	Dark green pressed pill sold as oxycodone in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and benzos and negative for oxycodone.
April 8, 2024 Powell River/ Qathet	Fentanyl	Fentanyl, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	Red, pink, and brown pebbles sold in Powell River tested positive for fentanyl and bromazolam, a benzo analog.
April 15, 2024 Vancouver	Down	Fentanyl, Caffeine, Bromazolam, Uncertain Carbohydrate	Positive	Positive	Orange and blue powders sold as down in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and bromazolam, a benzo analog. Substances caused overdose.
April 17, 2024 Vancouver	Down	MDA	Negative	Negative	White crystals sold as down in the DTES of Vancouver tested positive for 3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA) and negative for fentanyl and other opioids.
April 18, 2024 West Kootenay Region	Down	Multiple samples containing Fluorofentanyl, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	Samples of down tested with high concentrations of fluorofentanyl and bromazolam in the West Kootenay region.
April 18, 2024 Vernon	Down	Multiple samples containing Xylazine	N/A	N/A	Drug advisory for an increase in occurrences of xylazine found in down in Vernon.
April 22, 2024 Vancouver	Acetaminophen and Oxycodone (Percocet)	Dicalcium Phosphate, Uncertain Mineral, Uncertain Carbohydrate, Uncertain Oil, Uncertain Match	Positive	Negative	White pressed pill with imprint "TEC" sold as Percocet (acetaminophen and oxycodone) in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and negative for acetaminophen and oxycodone.
April 24, 2024 Vancouver	Crack Cocaine	Caffeine, Erythritol, Fentanyl	Positive	Negative	Yellow chunks expected to be crack cocaine in the DTES of Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and negative for cocaine.
April 30, 2024 Vancouver	Ketamine	Levamisole	Negative	Negative	Clear crystals sold as ketamine in Vancouver tested positive for levamisole, a veterinary drug that can cause adverse effects when taken by humans. Substance tested negative for ketamine.

*Note that etizolam and related benzodiazepine-like analogs do not consistently react to benzodiazepine test strips.

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.

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

Benzodiazepine-positivity



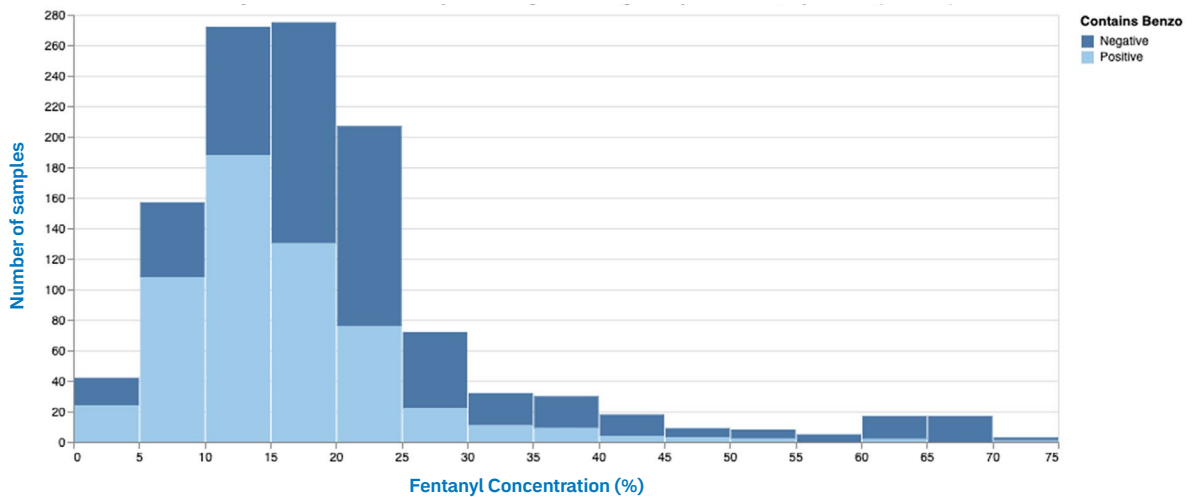
Month

During the month of April, **45.3%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in our partner sites around BC (**588 samples of 1298 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.

Fentanyl Quantification

The charts below summarize fentanyl concentrations of fentanyl-positive opioid samples brought for drug checking in British Columbia. Fentanyl concentrations were determined using FTIR and a calibrated fentanyl quantification model. Technicians at point-of-care may provide an estimated fentanyl quantification, generally an approximate range of fentanyl percentage in a mixture, but these results were calculated separately (post hoc) using the model for the purpose of this report.

Fentanyl Concentration of Opioid Drug Checking Samples in BC, April 2024



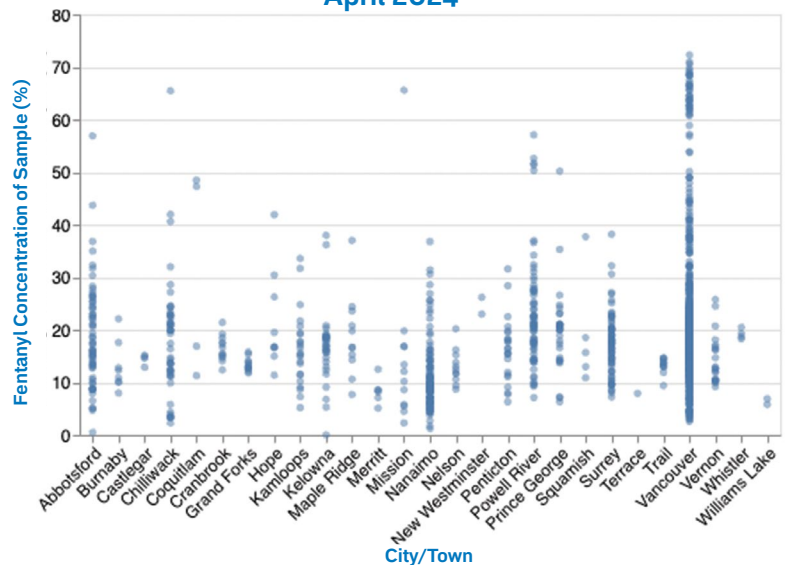
While most of fentanyl-positive opioids checked have a concentration of fentanyl between 10% and 20%, there remain many samples above 20% fentanyl-by-weight, and concentrations can approach 75% of the mixture. The median fentanyl concentration of all samples was 16.8% in April, consistent with the previous month. When purchasing fentanyl from an unregulated drug supply, it is often impossible to know what the fentanyl concentration of the drugs is. Drug checking can help, but point-of-care quantification results are provided in a range since it is not possible to be precise with the available technologies. For example, a technician might say, “This sample contains caffeine, mannitol, and between 5% and 10% fentanyl.”

Drug supplies vary by location in the province. While samples from smaller communities appear to be more consistent, it is important to remember that this is a small number of drugs checked in each city or town. It is also important to note that these locations include only those participating in the BCCSU Drug Checking Project that provide data from FTIR spectroscopy. These numbers may not represent the broader supply or the supply in other settings.

It is very important to remember that the results presented here are fentanyl, not fentanyl analogues like fluorofentanyl or carfentanil. While fluorofentanyl is reported to have similar potency to fentanyl, carfentanil is a very potent opioid that is often present below the detection limit of the spectrometer, and is therefore missed by point-of-care drug checking technologies. Your drug checking technician can explain the limitations in detail when you get your drugs checked, but always take additional harm reduction precautions, like using at an OPS if available, because potent opioids may be presented and go undetected.

If you have any questions about the results, please email us at drugchecking@bccsu.ubc.ca.

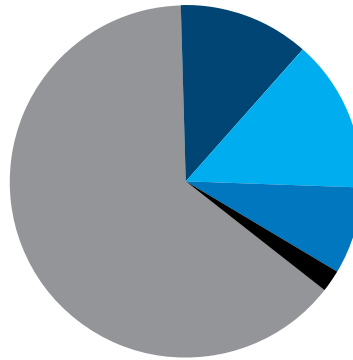
Fentanyl Concentration of Opioid Samples by City/Town, April 2024



Number of samples tested by region:

Total #: 2,723

1,736: Vancouver Coastal Health region (64%)



339: Fraser Health region (12%)

394: Interior Health region (14%)

210: Vancouver Island Health Region (8%)

44: Northern Health region (2%)

Number of samples with expected drug present

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Present	Not Present	Presence Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	1216	54	28	1298
Stimulant	495	17	1	513
Depressant	128	26	3	157
Psychedelic	339	22	10	371
Other	21	5	8	34
Polysubstance	1	1	0	2
Unknown	0	0	348	348
Total	2200	125	398	2723

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

Opioids 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 with expected drug present

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Present	Not Present	Presence Not Determined	Samples Tested
Fentanyl	182	7	0	189
Heroin	14	8	2	24
Other Opioid	0	1	0	1
Down	980	22	3	1005
Pharmaceutical	35	16	23	74
Opium	5	0	0	5
TOTAL	1216	54	28	1298

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:

