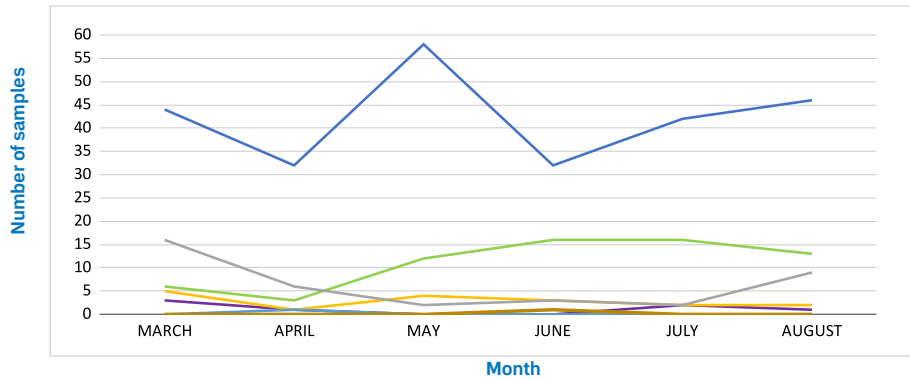


Key Findings

- In August, a total of 71 drug checks were performed by the POUNDS Project in the Northern Health region (4 access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip decreased to 56.5% (26 of 46 samples). The true rate may be higher as benzo-like substances such as etizolam are not reliably detected by benzodiazepine test strips.
- Benzodiazepines were detected by FTIR in 23.9% of unregulated opioids (11 of 46 samples), indicating its presence in higher concentrations.
- Fentanyl was detected by FTIR in 45.7% of unregulated opioids (21 of 46 samples), whereas fluorofentanyl was detected in 17.4% (8 samples). Ortho-Methylfentanyl was detected in 2.2% (1 sample).
- Xylazine was detected by FTIR in 2.2% of unregulated opioids (1 of 56 samples).
- Note that trends are hard to infer due to the small number of samples over a large region.
- To locate drug checking services in the Northern Health region, please see our [site locator](#).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



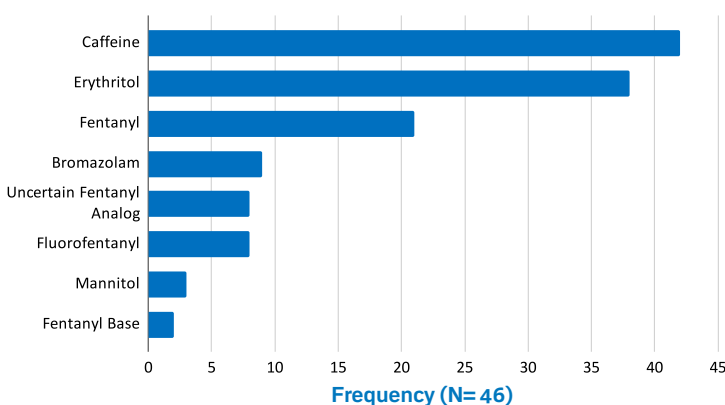
Number of samples by drug category in August

Opioid	46
Stimulant	13
Depressant	1
Psychedelic	2
Other	0
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	9

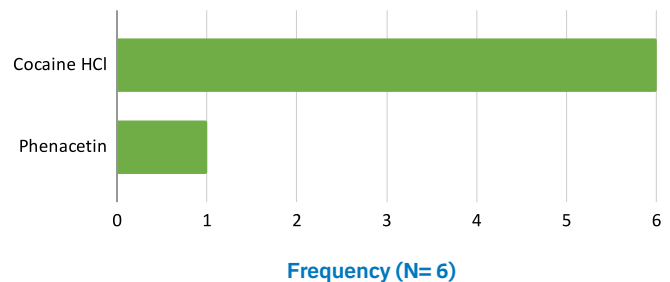
TOTAL: 71

Components found in drug samples in August

Components in unregulated opioids

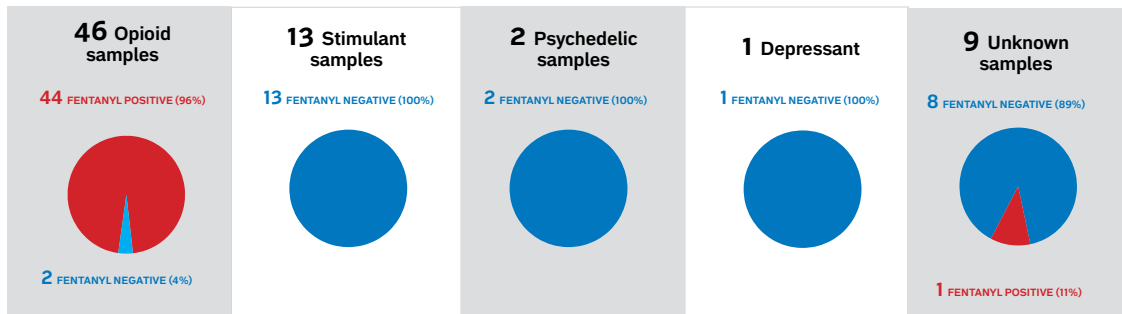


Components in cocaine



Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: desalkylgizapam, heroin HCl, lorazepam, phenacetine, uncertain carbohydrate, xylazine, ortho-methylfentanyl.

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.						

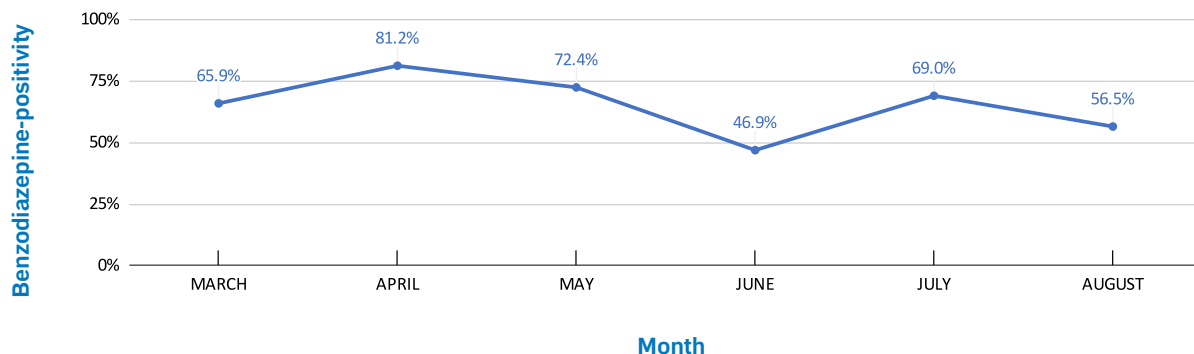
To subscribe to the provincial drug alert and response system, text the word JOIN to 253787 (ALERTS).

Number of drugs checks at each site

Location	# of drug checks
POUNDS (Prince George)	60
POUNDS (Terrace)	9
Total	71

Less than 5 samples were tested at the following location, which is included in the total: POUNDS (Dawson Creek, Fort St. John)

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



During the month of August, **56.5%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Northern Health (**26 samples of 46 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	45	1	0	46
Stimulant	12	1	0	13
Depressant	0	1	0	1
Psychedelic	1	1	0	2
Unknown	0	0	9	9
Total	58	4	9	71

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	44	1	0	45
Heroin	1	0	0	1
Total	45	1	0	46

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:

