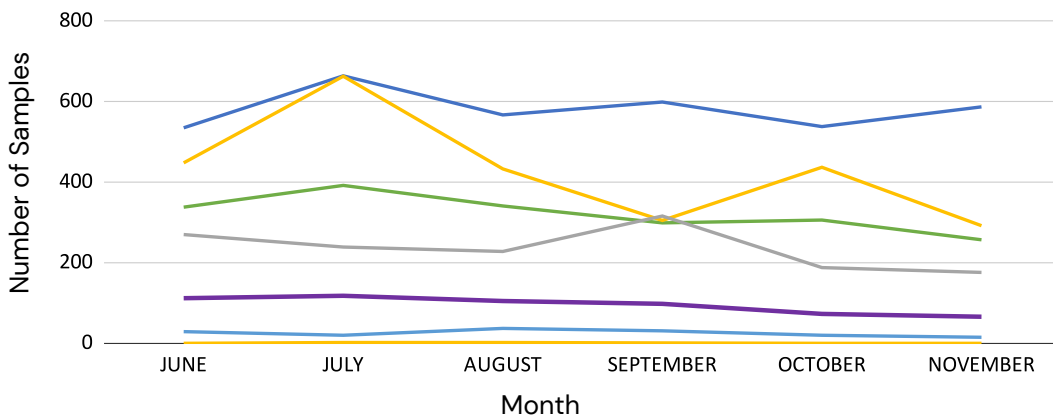




Key Findings

- In November, a total of 1,393 drug checks were performed across the Vancouver Coastal Health region (5 access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip was 31.0% (182 of 587 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were detected by FTIR in 11.7% of unregulated opioids (62 of 532 samples), indicating their presence in higher concentrations. Of these, desalkylgidazepam was most frequently identified (38 samples), surpassing bromazolam for the first time.
- Fentanyl was detected by FTIR in 44.5% of unregulated opioids (237 of 532 samples), whereas fluorofentanyl was detected in 17.3% (92 samples). Ortho-methylfentanyl was found in 14.5% (77 samples).
- Xylazine was detected by FTIR in 1.7% of unregulated opioids (9 of 532 samples).
- 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 Nov.

● Opioid	587
● Stimulant	257
● Depressant	66
● Psychedelic	292
● Other	15
● Polysubstance	0
● Unknown	176

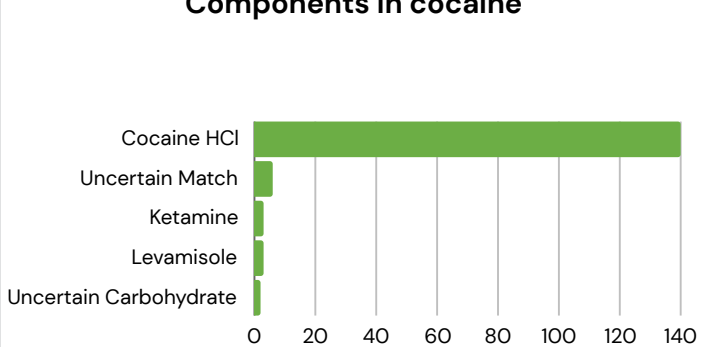
Total: 1,393

Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested (Vancouver)	1084
Insite (Vancouver)	232
LIFT Community Services (Powell River)	47
Tla'amin Nation (Powell River)	10
WCSS (Squamish)	19
Total:	1,393

Components found in drug samples in November

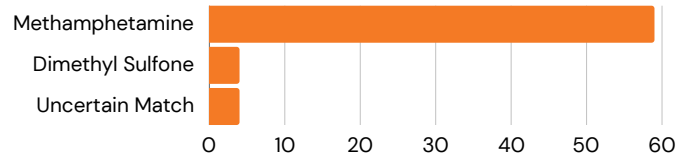
Components in cocaine



Frequency (N=142)

Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: benzocaine, cocaine base, creatine, phenacetin.

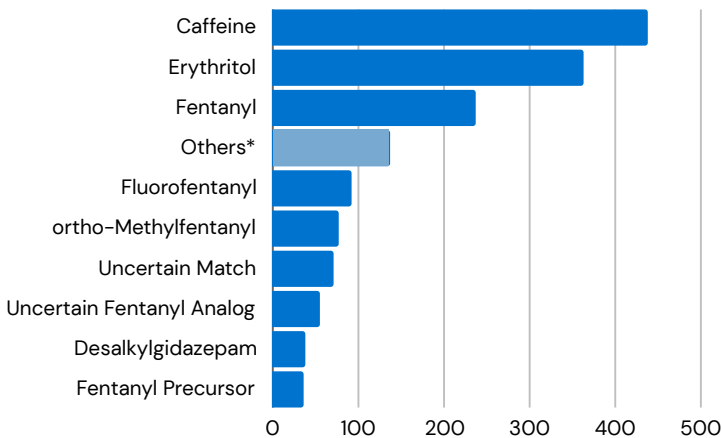
Components in methamphetamine



Frequency (N=61)

Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: ketamine, MDA, uncertain carbohydrate

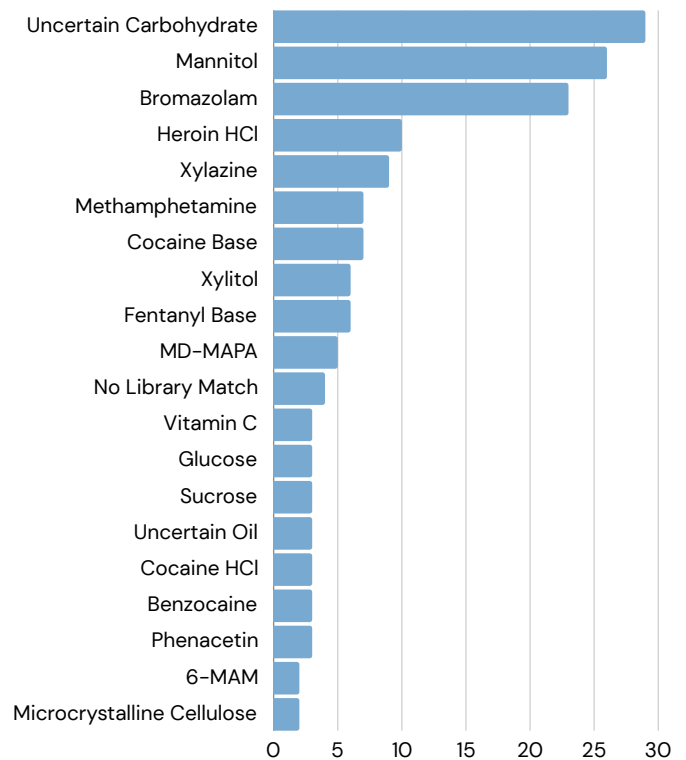
Components in unregulated opioids



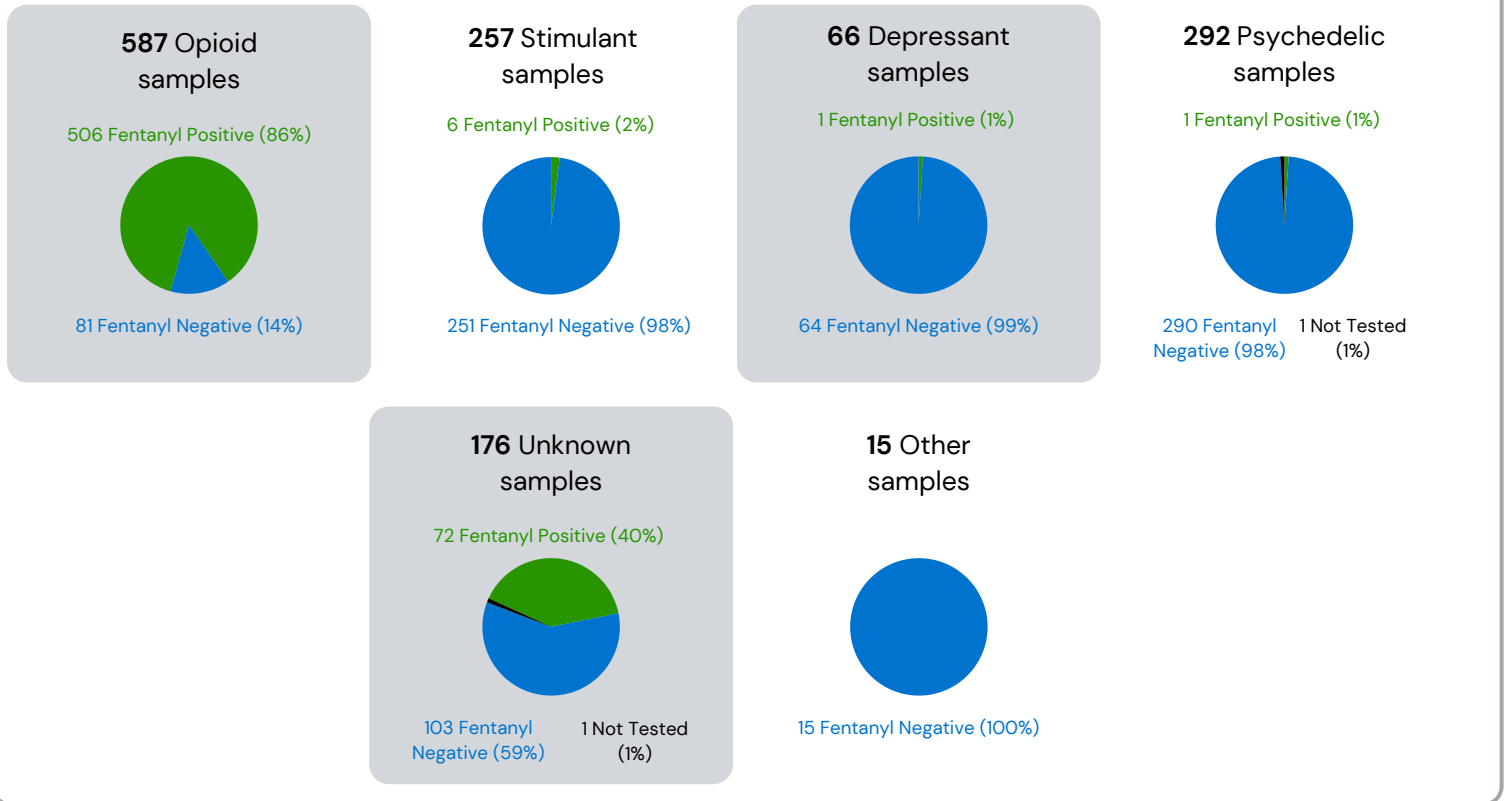
Frequency (N=532)

Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: 3C-P, Procaine, MDMA, Inositol, Flubromazepam, Dimethyl Sulfone, MDA.

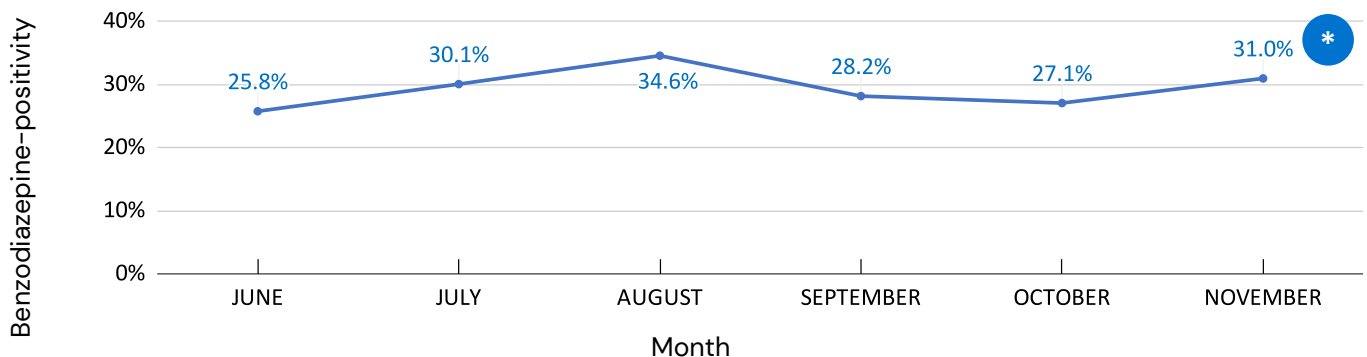
*Other components in unregulated opioids



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



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



*During the month of November, **31.0%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**182 samples of 587 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

Expected Drug	Present	Not Present	N/A	Total
Opioid	541	31	15	587
Psychedelic	272	14	6	292
Stimulant	249	8	0	257
Unknown	0	0	176	176
Depressant	41	23	2	66
Other	13	1	1	15
TOTAL	1116	77	200	1393

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents.

Number of opioid samples with expected drug present

Expected Drug	Present	Not Present	N/A	Total
Down	397	15	0	412
Fentanyl	105	3	0	108
Pharmaceutical	24	5	14	43
Heroin	6	6	1	13
Opium	9	0	0	9
Other Opioid	0	2	0	2
TOTAL	541	31	15	587

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.

<p>Depressant includes: benzodiazepines, etizolam, GHB, hypnotics</p>	<p>Opioid includes: "down", heroin, fentanyl (unregulated opioids), and pharmaceutical opioids</p>	<p>Polysubstance includes: cross-category mixtures</p>	<p>Psychedelic includes: MDMA and related, 2C-family, tryptamines, ketamine, LSD</p>	<p>Stimulant includes: methamphetamine, "speed," cocaine and crack cocaine, cathinones</p>	<p>Unknown includes: samples where the individual was unable to identify an expected substance - this includes found samples.</p>
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Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
November 1, 2024 Vancouver	Alprazolam (Xanax)	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Uncertain Oil, Xylazine	Negative	Negative	White rectangular pressed pill with imprint "XANAX" sold as alprazolam (Xanax) in Vancouver tested positive for xylazine and negative for alprazolam.
November 1, 2024 qathet (Powell River)	MDMA	Caffeine, Fentanyl	Positive	Negative	Blue powder sold as MDMA in the qathet region (Powell River) tested positive for fentanyl and negative for MDMA. Substance has caused multiple overdoses.
November 12, 2024 Vancouver	Unknown	Erythritol, Caffeine, Xylazine, Fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Purple chunk purchased in Vancouver tested positive for xylazine, fentanyl, and benzos.
November 20, 2024 qathet (Powell River)	Down	Fentanyl, Fluorofentanyl, Ortho-Methylfentanyl, Desalkylgidazepam*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples (red chunk, red flake, pink chunk) sold as down in the qathet region (Powell River) tested positive for fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, and desalkylgidazepam, a benzo analog. Substances have resulted in overdose and prolonged sedation
November 26, 2024 Vancouver	Down	Fentanyl, Medetomidine, Bromazolam*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples sold as down in the DTES of Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and medetomidine (green pebble), or fentanyl, benzos, and medetomidine (green chunk, pink chunk). Medetomidine is a sedative more toxic than xylazine that may not be detected by FTIR spectrometer.
November 26, 2024 Vancouver	Oxycodone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Fentanyl, Calcium Stearate, Xylazine	Positive	Negative	Light blue round counterfeit oxycodone tablets with imprint "M/30" sold in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and xylazine and negative for oxycodone.
November 26, 2024 Vancouver	Cocaine	Fentanyl, Cocaine, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	White powder sold as cocaine in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl, cocaine, and bromazolam. Substance has caused overdose.

Public Health Notifications Cont.

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
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*Results provided by complementary testing partner [Substance](#) using Paper Spray Mass Spectrometry, all other spectrometry 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.

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

Data represented in this report is collected from our partner sites across the province utilizing Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometry in combination with BTNX fentanyl test strips, as well as benzodiazepine test strips when applicable. We note the FTIR spectrometer has a detection limit of approximately 5% concentration (McCrae, 2019).

BCCSU gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following partners:



PROVIDENCE HEALTH CARE
Research Institute

