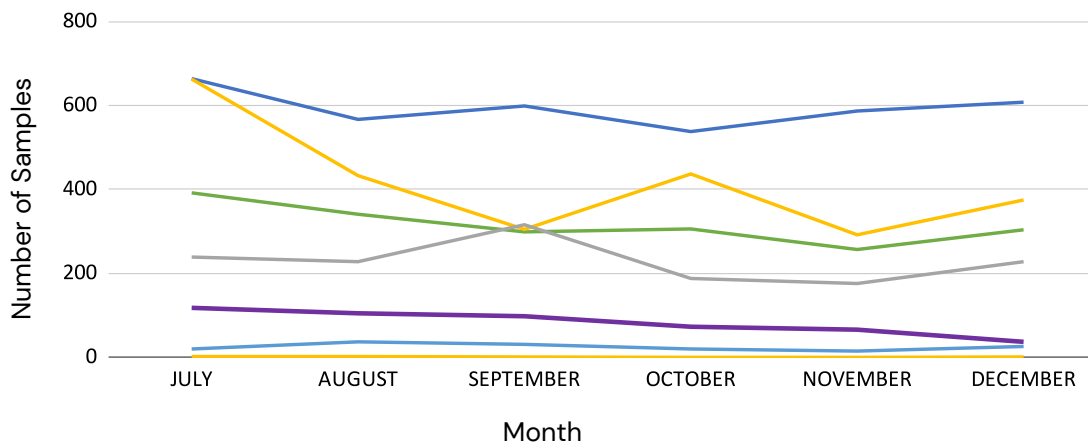




Key Findings

- In December, a total of 1,579 drug checks were performed across the Vancouver Coastal Health region (8 access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip increased from the previous month to 40.1% (244 of 608 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were detected by FTIR in 17.2% of unregulated opioids (96 of 559 samples), indicating their presence in higher concentrations. Of these, desalkylgidazepam was most frequently identified (60 samples), surpassing bromazolam for the second month in a row.
- Fentanyl was detected by FTIR in 38.5% of unregulated opioids (215 of 559 samples), whereas fluorofentanyl was detected in 14.1% (79 samples). Ortho-methylfentanyl was found in 13.2% (74 samples).
- Xylazine was detected by FTIR in 1.8% of unregulated opioids (10 of 559 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 Dec.

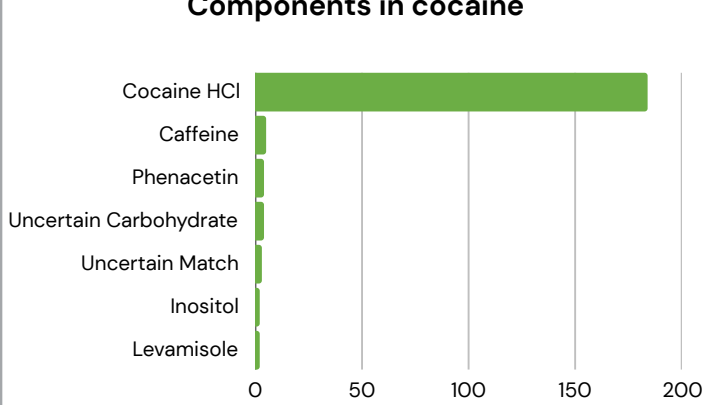
● Opioid	608
● Stimulant	304
● Depressant	37
● Psychedelic	375
● Other	26
● Polysubstance	1
● Unknown	228
Total:	1,579

Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested (Vancouver)	1226
Insite (Vancouver)	249
LIFT Community Services (Powell River)	70
Tla'amin Nation (Powell River)	6
WCSS (Squamish)	28
Total:	1,579

Components found in drug samples in December

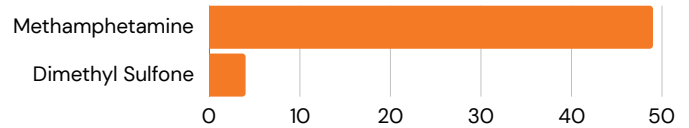
Components in cocaine



Frequency (N=192)

Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: 3-FPM, Acetaminophen, Benzocaine, Glutamine, Lactose, MDMA, Uncertain Mineral.

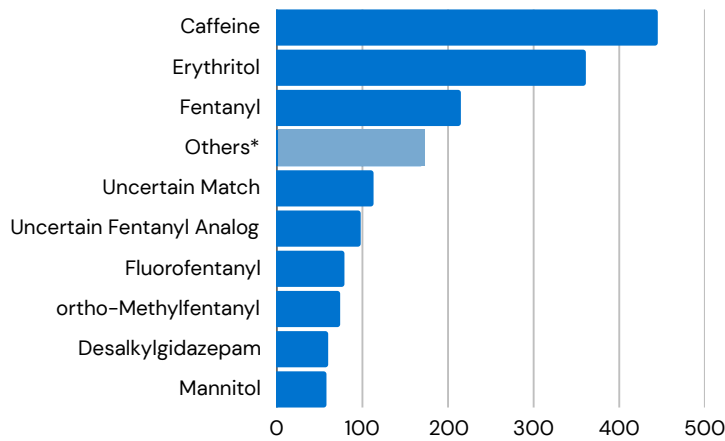
Components in methamphetamine



Frequency (N=50)

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

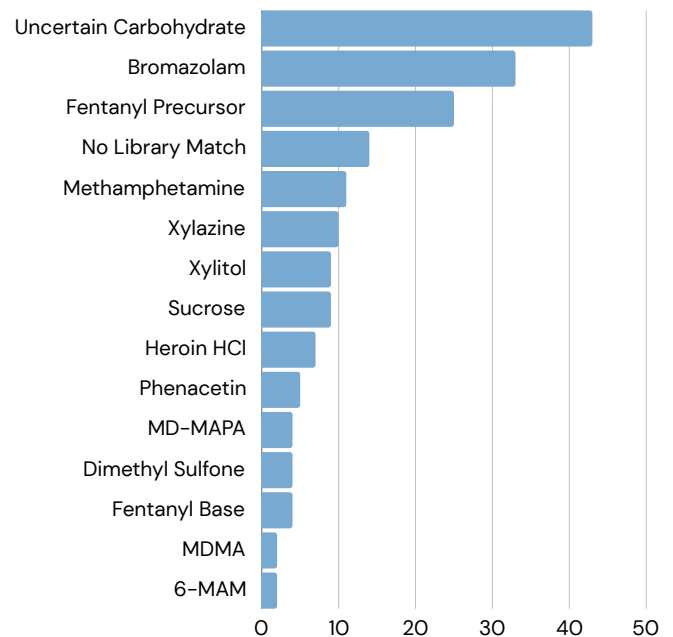
Components in unregulated opioids



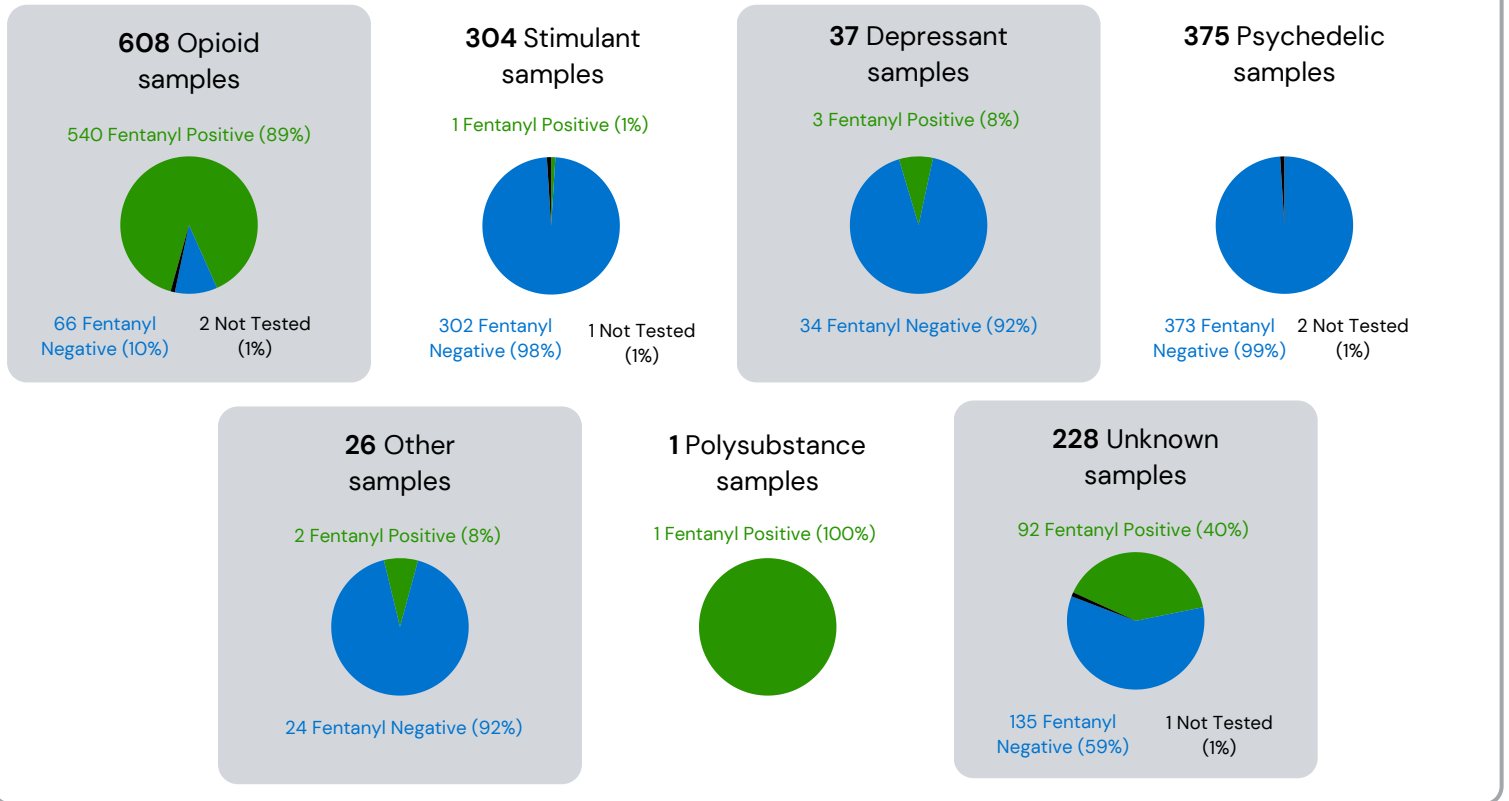
Frequency (N=559)

Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: Benzocaine, Inositol, Microcrystalline Cellulose, Etizolam, Noscapine, Flubromazepam, Polyethylene Glycol, Sodium Bicarbonate, Cocaine HCl, Cocaine Base, Uncertain Mineral, Uncertain Oil, Bromazepam, Furanyl UF-17.

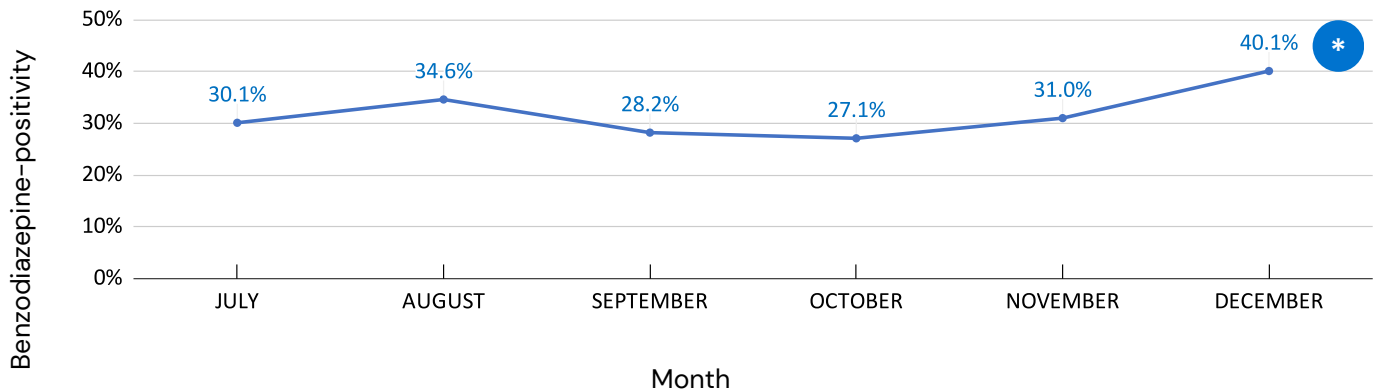
*Other components in unregulated opioids



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



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



*During the month of December, **40.1%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**244 samples of 608 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		568	32	8	608
Psychedelic		354	20	1	375
Stimulant		287	16	1	304
Unknown		0	0	228	228
Depressant		32	4	1	37
Other		22	2	2	26
Polysubstance		1	0	0	1
TOTAL		1264	74	241	1579

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		425	8	0	433
Fentanyl		104	11	0	115
Pharmaceutical		27	7	8	42
Heroin		5	6	0	11
Opium		7	0	0	7
TOTAL		568	32	8	608

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
December 10, 2024 Vancouver	Hydromorphone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Caffeine, Uncertain Match	Positive	Positive	White pressed tablet with imprint "H8/APO" sold in Vancouver as hydromorphone tested positive for fentanyl and benzos and negative for hydromorphone.
December 10, 2024 Vancouver	MDMA	MDMA, Microcrystalline Cellulose, Uncertain Oil, Methamphetamine, Uncertain Match	Negative	Positive	Light blue pressed pill marked "Hermes" sold in Vancouver as MDMA tested positive for MDMA, methamphetamine and benzos.
December 23, 2024 Vancouver	Hydromorphone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Para-fluoronorfentanyl Base, Bromazolam, Uncertain Oil	Negative	Positive	White tablet imprinted with "APO/8" sold in Vancouver as hydromorphone tested positive for fentanyl analog para-fluoronorfentanyl, and bromazolam.
December 23, 2024 Vancouver	Down	Erythritol, Para-fluorofentanyl, Xylazine, Uncertain Match	Positive	Positive	Dark grey granule sold in Vancouver as down tested positive for para fluorofentanyl, xylazine, and benzos.

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

