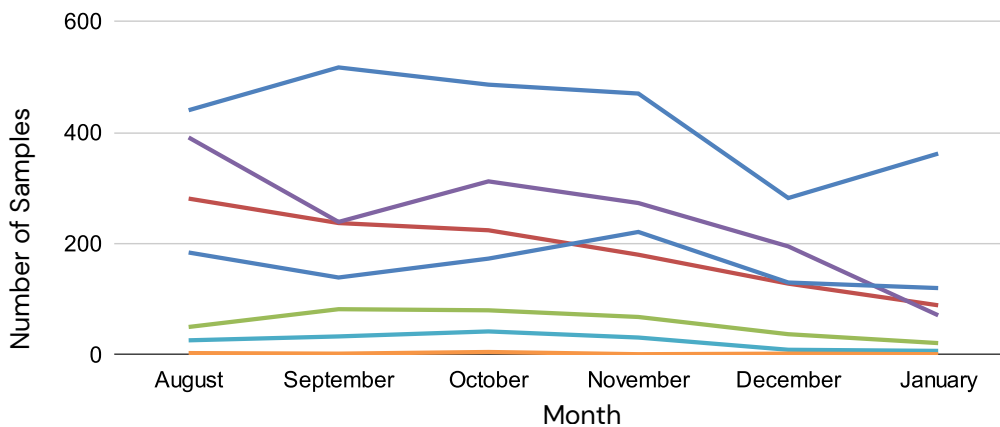




Key findings

- In January, **671** drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Vancouver Coastal Health region (**9 access points**). The decrease in total drug checks from previous months is a result of the closure of a high-volume site in the region in December 2025.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip decreased to **21.8%**. Of these, desalkylgidazepam was the most common detected by FTIR.
- Novel benzodiazepines continue to be detected in unregulated opioids, which included ethylflualprazolam in January. We note that ethylflualprazolam may not reliably be detected by test strip.
- There has been an increase in medetomidine in the unregulated drug supply, coinciding with an uptick in drug alerts issued in January. Of the total **12 alerts**, **4** were related to medetomidine, including a province-wide alert issued by the BCCDC, and 1 issued within the VCH region.
- Among opioid samples sent for secondary testing in January (**n=4**), medetomidine was detected in **4 samples**. Carfentanil was not detected this month, though the number of samples submitted overall was small.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



Opioid	362
Stimulant	89
Depressant	21
Psychedelic	71
Other	7
Polysubstance	1
Unknown	120
Total:	671

Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Insite (Vancouver)	648
Vancouver Coastal Health (Powell River)	8
Whistler Community Service Society (Squamish)	7
Whistler Community Service Society (Whistler)	6
Total	671

Less than 5 samples were tested at the following location, which has been included in the total:
Insite (Richmond).

Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	332	26	4	362
Stimulant	86	3	0	89
Depressant	11	10	0	21
Psychedelic	67	2	2	71
Other	6	0	1	7
Polysubstance	1	0	0	1
Unknown	0	0	120	120
Total	503	41	127	671

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

Opioids

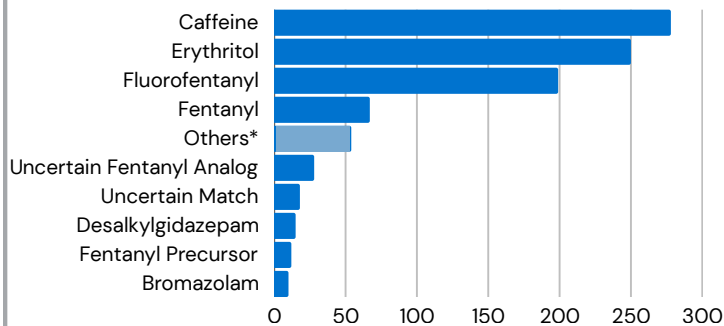
Number of opioid samples with the expected drug present

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	14	6	0	20
Heroin	5	4	0	9
Down	278	13	1	292
Pharmaceutical	30	2	3	35
Opium	5	1	0	6
Total	332	26	4	362

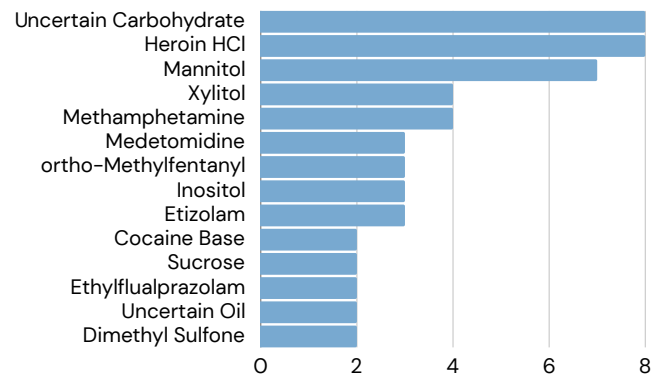
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents. 'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=321)

Main components

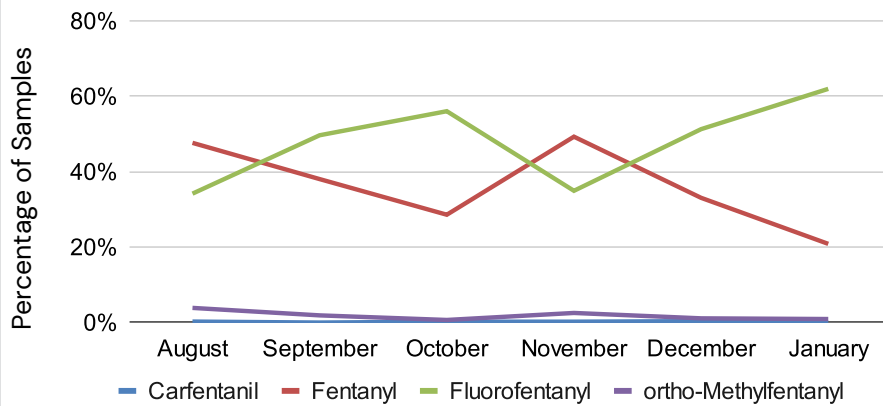


Other components*



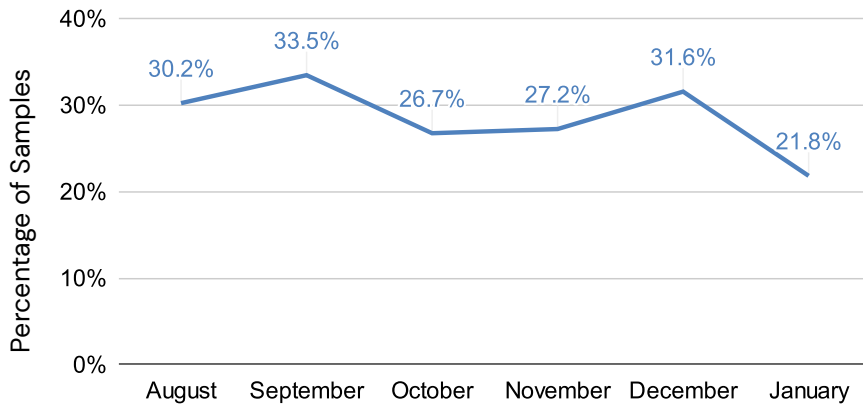
Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



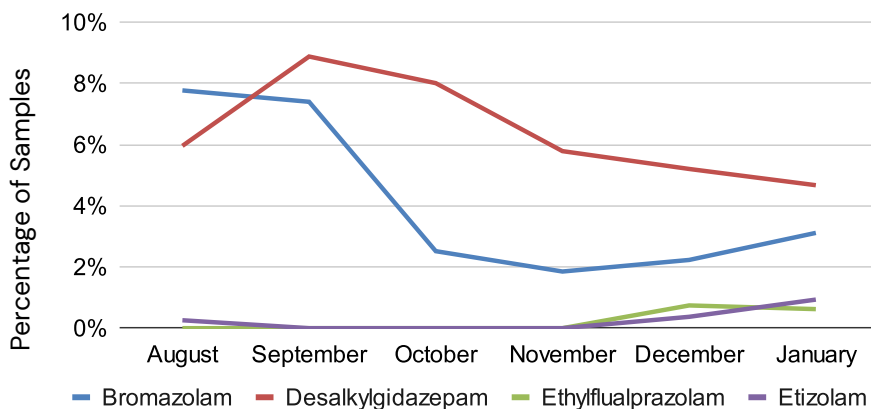
- In January, fluorofentanyl detection by FTIR increased to **62.0%** of unregulated opioids (**199 of 321 samples**), while fentanyl detection by FTIR decreased to **20.9%** (**67 samples**).
- We note that the true number of samples containing carfentanil is expected to be higher than what is observed by FTIR, as it is usually contained in concentrations below the detection limit (<5%). Please see the **Secondary Testing section** of this report for more information.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months



- During the month of January, **21.8%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in the Vancouver Coastal Health region (**79 samples of 362 checked**).
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The true number may be higher, as some benzodiazepines may be missed by test strip.

Types of benzodiazepines detected by FTIR, past 6 months

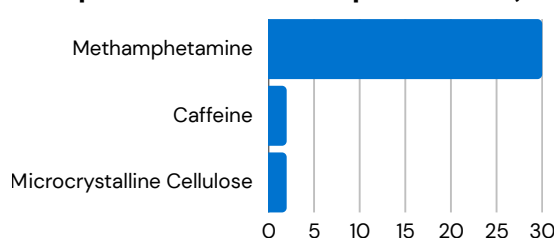


- In January, **9.7%** of unregulated opioids (**31 of 321 samples**) contained benzodiazepines in concentrations high enough to be detectable by FTIR (>5%).
- While desalkylgizepam remained the most common, detection declined to **4.7%** of unregulated opioids tested (**15 samples**).
- We are continuing to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines. In January, this included ethylflualprazolam (**2 samples**). We note that ethylflualprazolam may not reliably be detected by test strip.

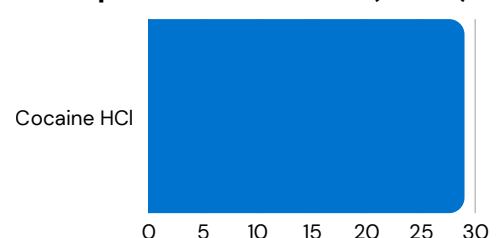
Non-Opioids

Components detected in stimulants

Components in methamphetamine (N=32)

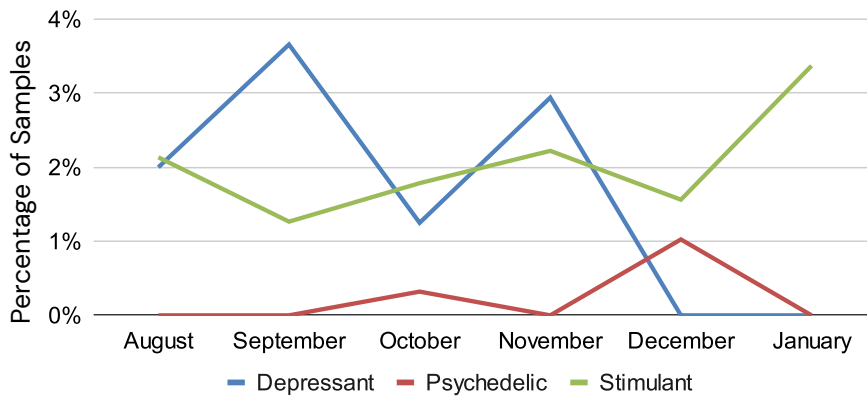


Components in cocaine (N=29)



Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

Fentanyl detected in non-opioids, past 6 months

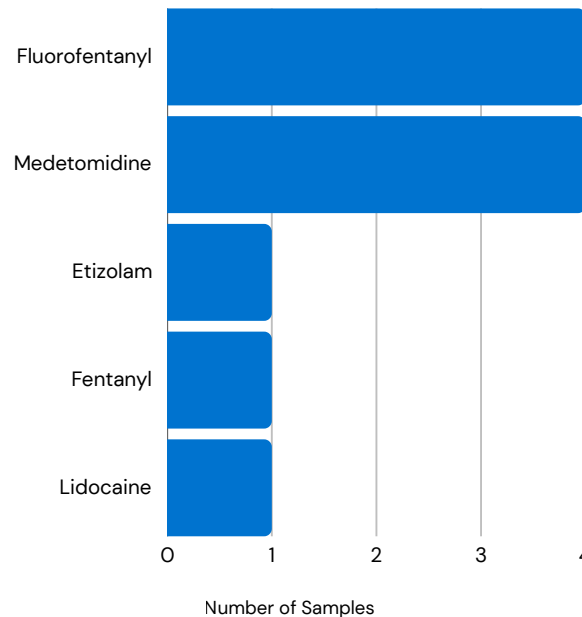


- In January, a total of **3 stimulant samples (2 methamphetamine, 1 crack cocaine)** tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR and/or test strip.
- Of these, **2 samples (66.7%)** were expected to be cross-contaminated by the service user, noting they had been stored with opioids prior to submitting the samples for drug checking.

PSMS Secondary Testing Results Summary

A subset of samples were sent for secondary testing provided by Substance at the University of Victoria, using Paper-Spray Mass Spectrometry (PSMS). PSMS is a highly sensitive technology, and can detect components in samples below the detection limit of the FTIR (<5%). Below is a summary of all active components detected in opioid samples sent in confirmatory testing. For more information about Substance please visit their [website](#).

Active components in opioids submitted (N=4)



Public Health Notifications

There has been an increase in medetomidine in the unregulated drug supply, coinciding with an uptick in alerts issued in January. Of the total 12 alerts, 4 were related to medetomidine, including a province-wide alert issued by the BCCDC, and 1 issued within the VCH region. Listed below are the alerts pertaining to samples submitted for drug checking.

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
January 20, 2026 Powell River	Down	Fluorofentanyl, Medetomidine*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples (green chunk, yellow chunk) sold as down in Powell River tested positive for fluorofentanyl and medetomidine, a tranquilizer more toxic than xylazine. May cause low heart rate and prolonged sedation.
January 26, 2026 Vancouver	Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Uncertain Oil	Positive	Negative	White triangular pressed tablet with imprint "DID" sold as hydromorphone (Dilaudid or "dilly 8") in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and negative for hydromorphone.

All spectrometry results are determined by FTIR, with the exception of the following:
 * Results provided by complementary testing partner [Substance](#) using Paper Spray Mass Spectrometry

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).

About this data

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

Depressant includes:
benzodiazepines, etizolam, GHB, hypnotics

Opioid includes:
"down", heroin, fentanyl (unregulated opioids), and pharmaceutical opioids

Polysubstance includes:
cross-category mixtures

Psychedelic includes:
MDMA and related, 2C-family, tryptamines, ketamine, LSD

Stimulant includes:
methamphetamine, "speed," cocaine and crack cocaine, cathinones

Unknown includes:
samples where the individual was unable to identify an expected substance - this includes found samples.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of [our partners](#) to collect this data.

To find drug checking services in your area please visit our [site locator](#).