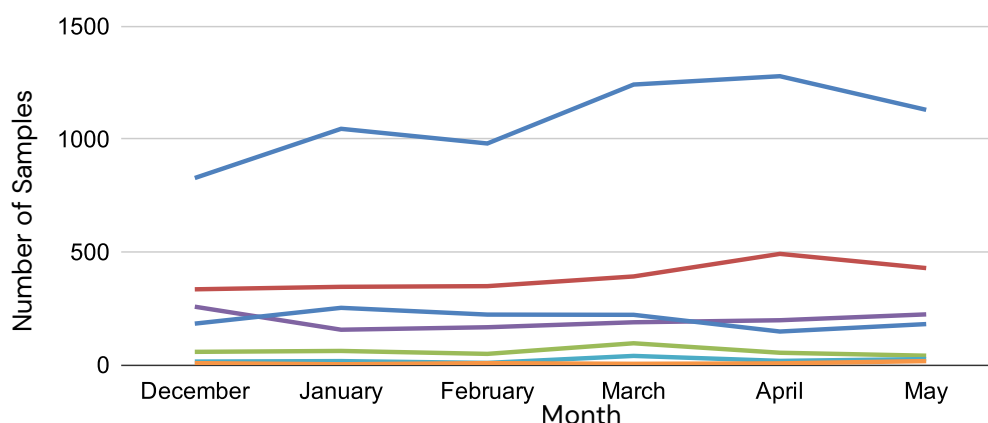




Key findings

- In May, **2,048** drug checks were performed by community FTIR drug checking sites in BC (**57 access points**). The increase in samples from previous months is due to the expansion of services in the Interior Health region.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to **42.7%**. Of these, desalkylgidazepam was most frequently identified, though detection has been declining.
- We continue to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines in unregulated opioids. In May, ethylbromazolam detection increased to second most common benzodiazepine detected overall. Other novel benzodiazepines identified this month included ethylflualprazolam, meclonazepam, nifoxipam, and 3-HO-desalkylgidazepam.
- The median concentration of fentanyl and/or fluorofentanyl in unregulated opioids increased to **8.8%** (see page 3).
- The percentage of unregulated opioids testing positive for medetomidine increased to **29.7%**. In response to emergence of medetomidine in the drug supply, all health authorities have implemented medetomidine test strips at drug checking sites.
- Among opioids sent for secondary testing across BC in May (**n=229**), medetomidine was detected in **121 samples**. Medetomidine concentrations ranged from <1% to 16%, and the median was **2.0%**. In addition, carfentanil was detected in **16 samples**, and xylazine in **11 samples**.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



Number of samples by drug category in May

Opioid	1130
Stimulant	429
Depressant	41
Psychotropic	224
Other	26
Polysubstance	17
Unknown	181

Total: 2,048

Number of samples tested by region

Vancouver Coastal Health region: 769 (**38%**)

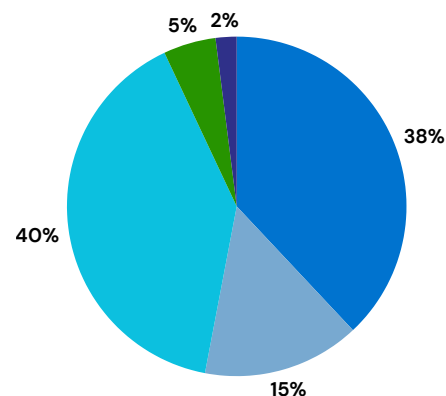
Fraser Health region: 297 (**15%**)

Interior Health region: 829 (**40%**)

Island Health region: 107 (**5%**)

Northern Health region: 46 (**2%**)

Total: 2,048*



*Does not include samples tested at Substance Drug Checking services.
Please see the Island Health report for more information.

Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	1086	32	12	1130
Stimulant	412	17	0	429
Depressant	25	15	1	41
Psychedelic	217	5	2	224
Other	18	1	7	26
Polysubstance	13	4	0	17
Unknown	0	0	181	181
Total	1771	74	203	2048

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

Opioids

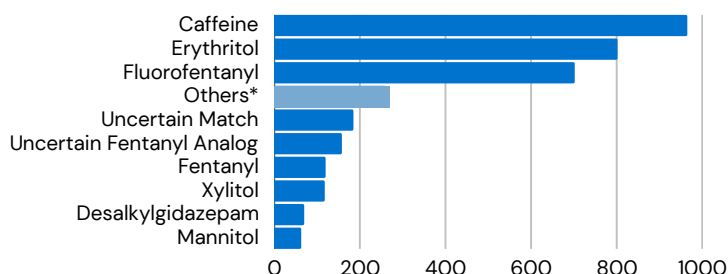
Number of opioid samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	47	3	0	50
Heroin	3	5	0	8
Other Opioid	2	0	0	2
Down	991	8	1	1000
Pharmaceutical	40	15	11	66
Opium	3	1	0	4
Total	1086	32	12	1130

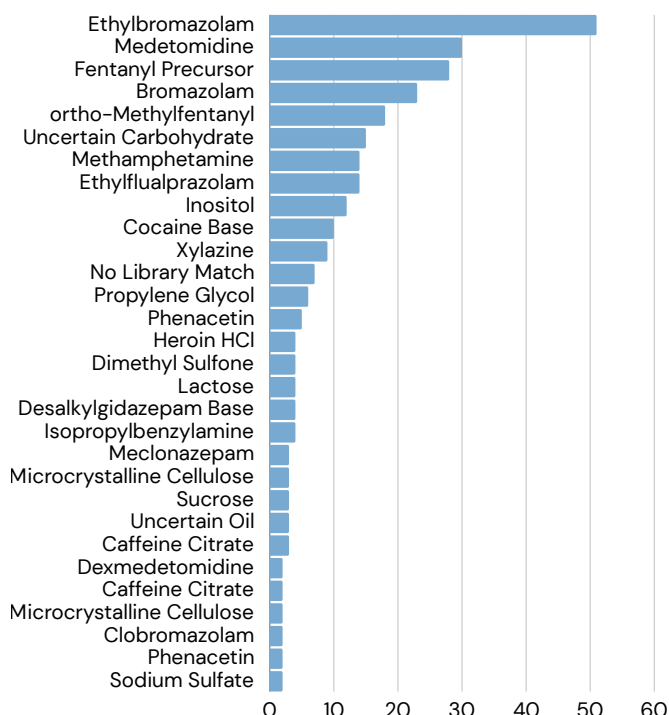
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents.
'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=1058)

Main components



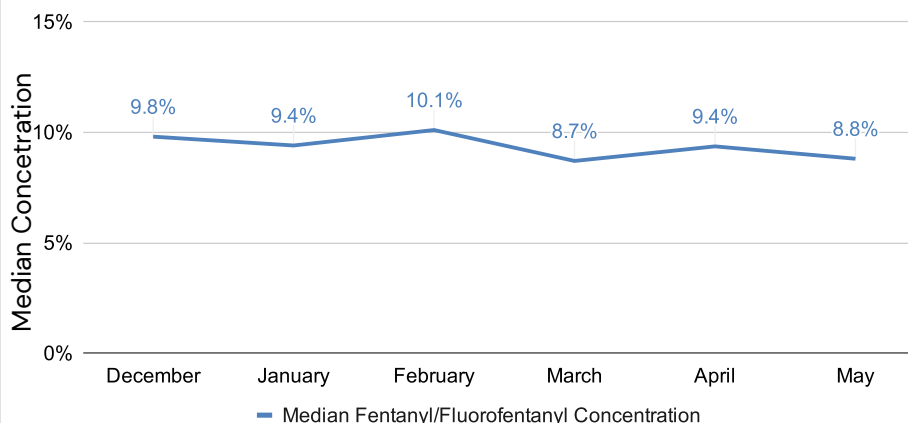
Other components



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

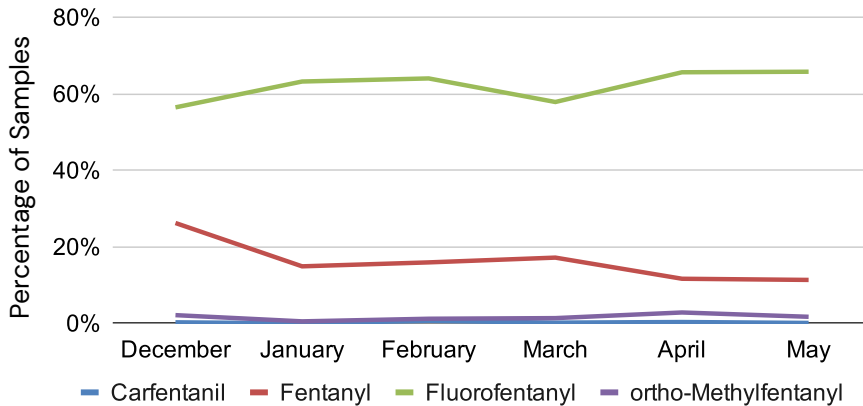
Median fentanyl concentration of unregulated opioids, past 6 months

Concentrations were estimated using a validated quantification model for the purposes of this report with aggregated data. To learn more about the QUANT3 quantification model visit [here](#).



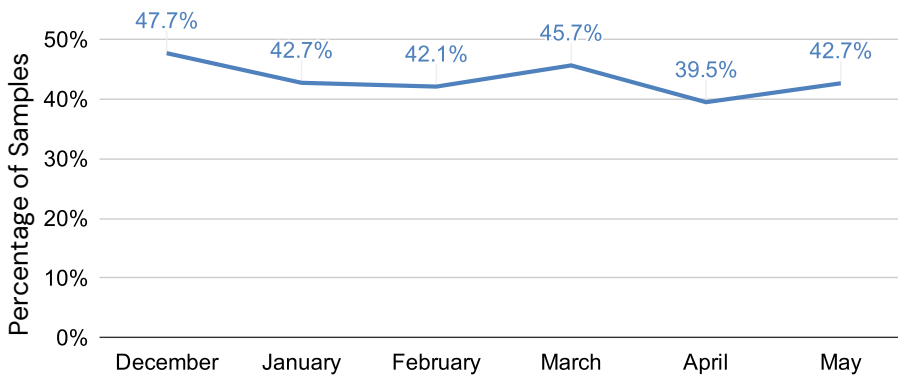
- In May, the overall median fentanyl/fluorofentanyl concentration decreased to **8.8% (n=1003)**.
- Most unregulated opioids contained fentanyl and/or fluorofentanyl at concentrations between **4.3% and 13.6%**, but concentrations can range from trace amounts to comprising most of the mixture.
- Fentanyl and fluorofentanyl are the predominate fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, and are considered to have similar potency. They are combined here to show their overall median concentration over the past 6 months.

Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



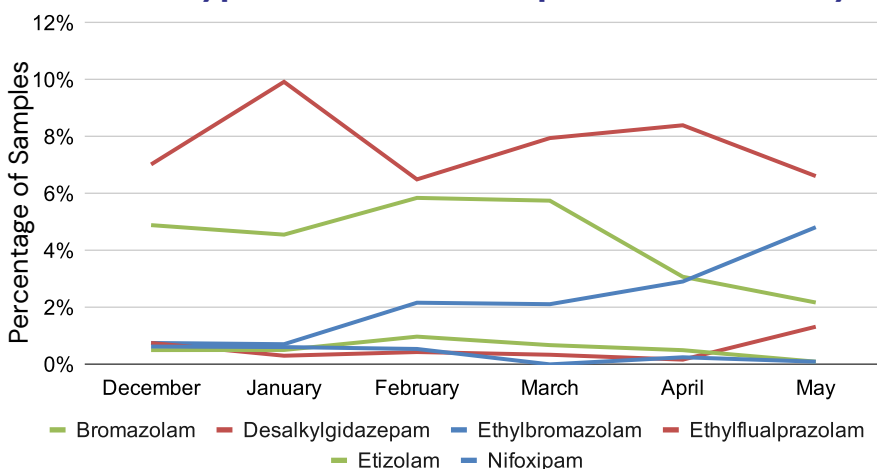
- In May, fluorofentanyl was detected by FTIR in **65.8%** of unregulated opioids (**702 of 1058**), the highest level of detection to-date.
- Conversely, fentanyl was detected in **11.3%** of opioids (**120 samples**), the lowest level of detection to-date. Declining fentanyl detections may indicate that less is circulating in the opioid supply, and/or that it is present in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%).
- Carfentanil was detected by FTIR in 1 sample this month. The true number is expected to be higher, as carfentanil is usually contained in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%). See the **Secondary Testing** section for more information.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months



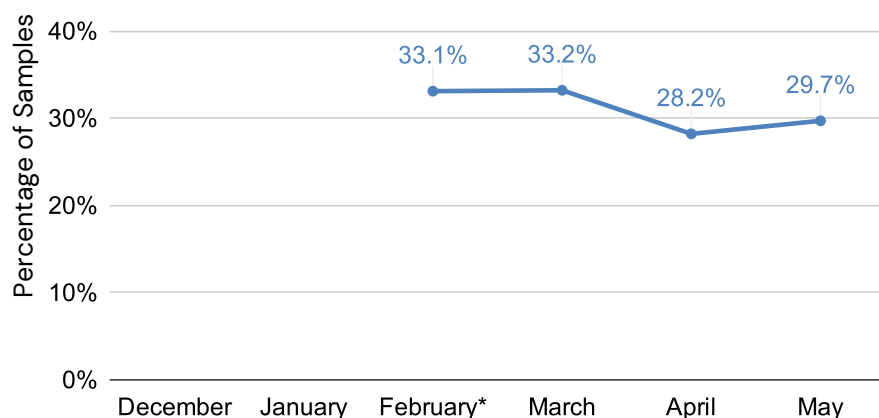
- During the month of May, the percentage of opioid samples testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to **42.7% (482 samples of 1130 checked)**.
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The true percentage may be higher, as some benzodiazepines (e.g., etizolam, ethylflualprazolam) may be missed by test strip.

Types of benzodiazepines detected by FTIR, past 6 months



- In May, **15.7%** of unregulated opioids (166 of 1058) contained benzodiazepines at concentrations detectable by FTIR (>5%). Of these, desalkylgidazepam remained the most common (**6.6%; 70 samples**).
- For the first time, ethylbromazolam was the second most common overall. This reflects a shift from previous months, with bromazolam detections declining as ethylbromazolam continues to increase.
- We are continuing to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines. Alongside ethylbromazolam, this included ethylflualprazolam, meclonazepam, nifoxipam, and 3-HO-desalkylgidazepam in May.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for medetomidine, past 6 months

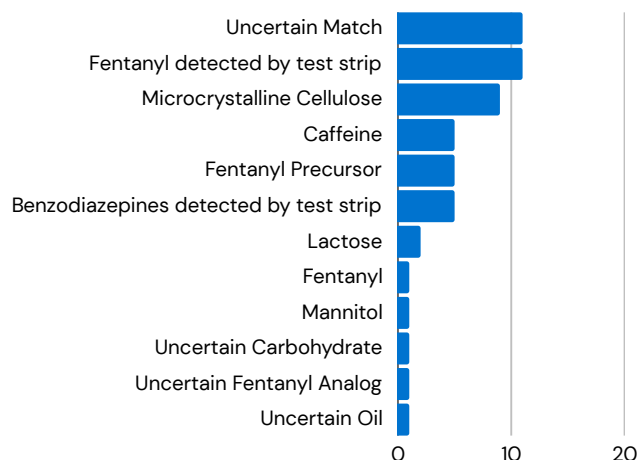


- During the month of May, the percentage of unregulated opioids testing positive for medetomidine increased to **29.7% (314 of 1058)**. The majority were also positive for benzodiazepines (**212 samples**).
- Unregulated opioids are checked for medetomidine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. As of March, test strips have been implemented at all drug checking sites in response to the emergence of medetomidine, as it is typically present in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%).
- *Please note that February consists of samples checked only in the Interior Health region.

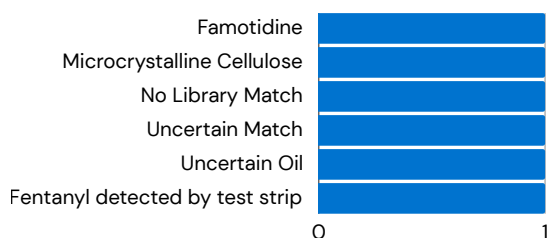
Components detected in pharmaceutical opioids

(where expected drug was not detected)

Hydromorphone (N=12)



Oxycodone (N=3)

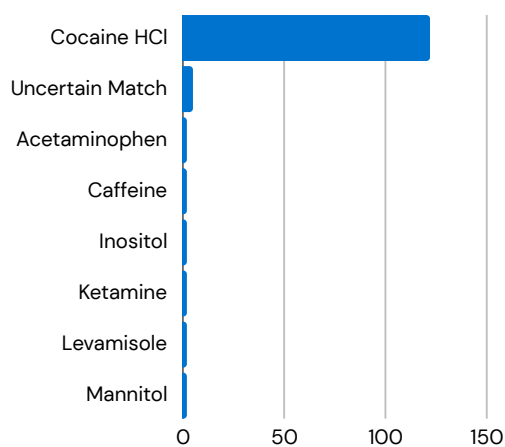


- In May, a total of **66** samples were submitted as pharmaceutical opioids. Of these, hydromorphone (Dilaudid) (**n=39**), acetaminophen + oxycodone (Percocet) (**n=14**), and oxycodone (OxyContin) (**n=8**) were the most frequently submitted.
- Among samples expected to contain hydromorphone, **12** were determined to be counterfeit as they contained unexpected active ingredients. The most common active ingredients detected were fentanyl/analogs, and benzodiazepines detected by test strip..
- Among samples expected to contain oxycodone, **2** were determined to be counterfeit as they contained unexpected active ingredients, which included fentanyl/analogs detected by test strip, and a substance that could not be identified (no library match). One sample contained famotidine, a heartburn medication

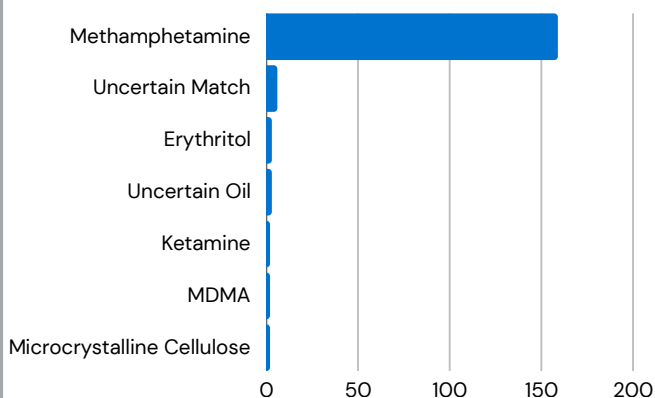
Non-Opioids

Components detected in stimulants

Components in methamphetamine (N=130)

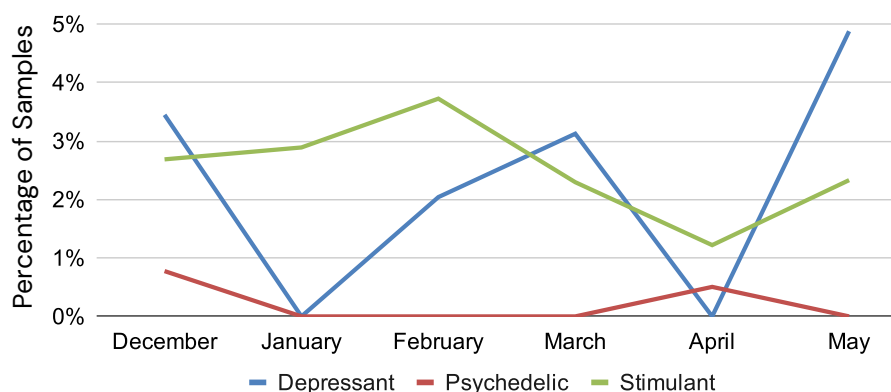


Components in cocaine (N=169)



Additional components detected a single time of samples have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on our [dashboard](#)

Fentanyl detected in non-opioids, past 6 months



- In May, **4.9%** of all depressants (2 unknown benzodiazepine samples), and **2.3%** of all stimulants (7 methamphetamine, 2 cocaine HCl, and 1 crack cocaine sample), tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR and/or test strip.
- Of these, **3** samples were expected to be cross-contaminated by the service user due to sample storage/handling with opioids prior to submitting the sample for drug checking.

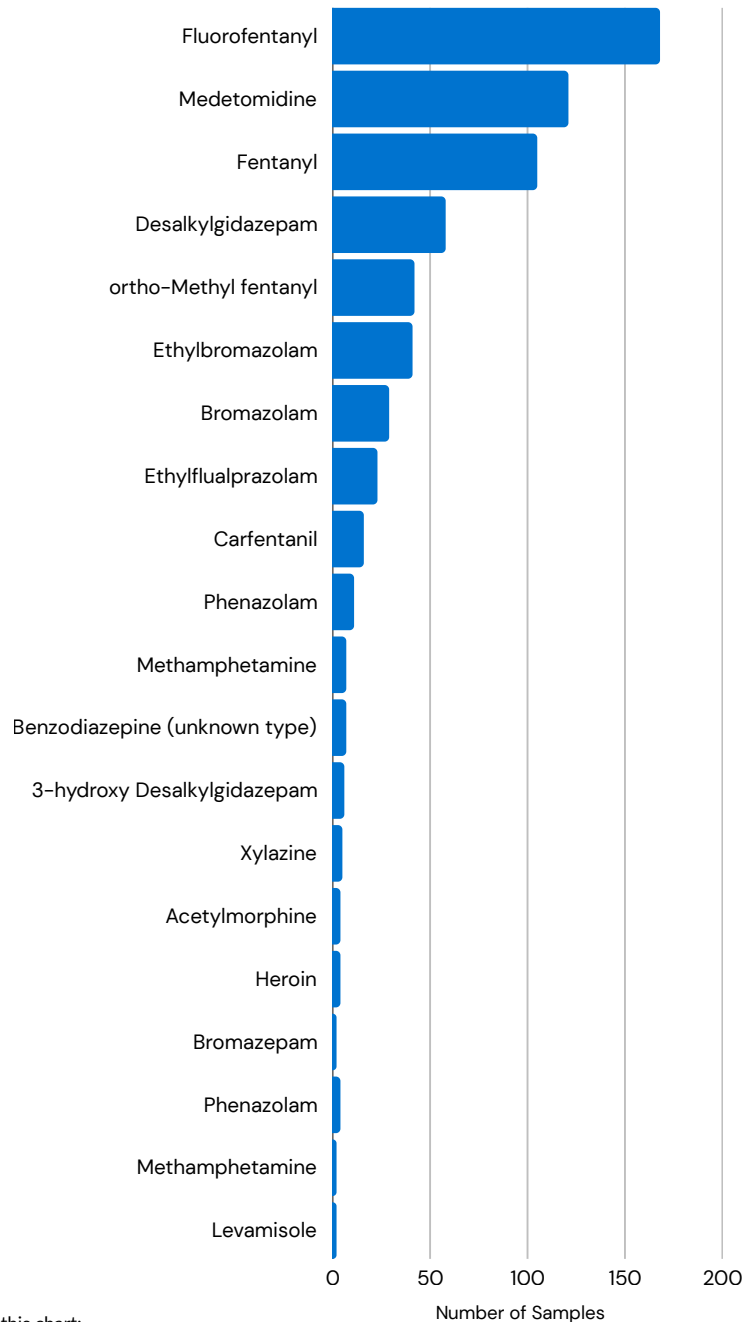
PSMS Secondary Testing Results Summary

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](#).

Total opioids sent to Substance

Health Authority	Number of Samples
Interior Health	108
Fraser Health	62
Island Health	29
Northern Health	27
Vancouver Coastal Health	3
Total	229

Active components detected (n=229)



To save space, additional components detected a single time have been omitted from this chart: Meclonazepam, Flualprazolam, Lidocaine, Procaine, Fentanyl analogue (unknown type), Methocarbamol, Nifoxipam, Acetaminophen.

Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Alert Message
May 19, 2026 Kamloops	Down	Purple/pink chunks/pebbles sold as 'Down' were found to contain high amounts of medetomidine (16%) and fentanyl (29%).

Alerts are issued based on FTIR and test strip results determined at point-of-care, or results from samples sent for further secondary testing by [Substance](#), or [Health Canada Drug Analysis Service](#)

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.
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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](#).