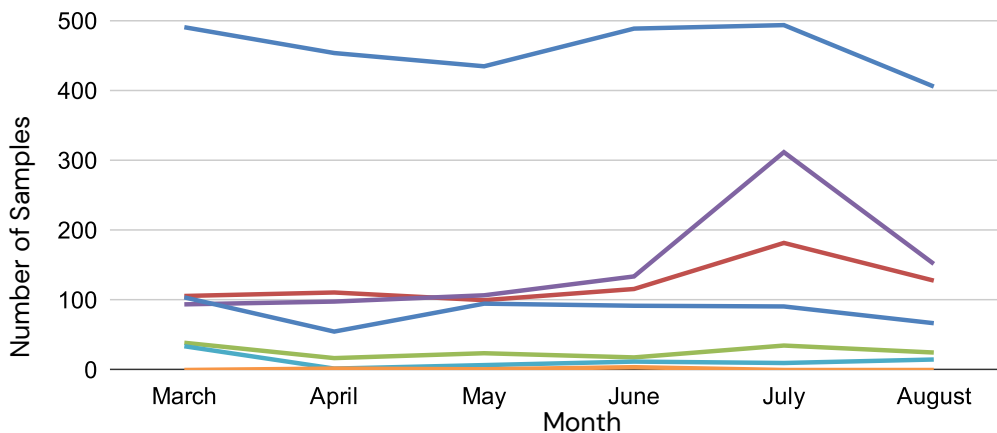




Key findings

- In August, **793** drug checks were performed by community FTIR drug checking sites in the Vancouver Coastal region (**10** access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to **28.3%**. The true percentage may be higher, as some benzodiazepines (e.g., ethylflualprazolam) may be missed by test strip.
- Ethylbromazolam and ethylflualprazolam, novel benzodiazepines, were the most common benzodiazepines detected in unregulated opioids overall.
- The percentage of unregulated opioids testing positive for medetomidine decreased to **10.0%**. In response to emergence of medetomidine in the drug supply, Vancouver Coastal has implemented medetomidine test strips at all drug checking sites.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



Number of samples by drug category in August

Opioid	406
Stimulant	128
Depressant	25
Psychedelic	152
Other	15
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	67

Total: 793

Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Insite (Vancouver)	750
LIFT Community Services (Powell River)	11
Whistler Community Service Society (Squamish)	17
Whistler Community Service Society (Whistler)	15
Total	793

Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	395	9	2	406
Stimulant	120	8	0	128
Depressant	22	3	0	25
Psychedelic	148	3	1	152
Other	12	3	0	15
Polysubstance	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	67	67
Total	697	26	70	793

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

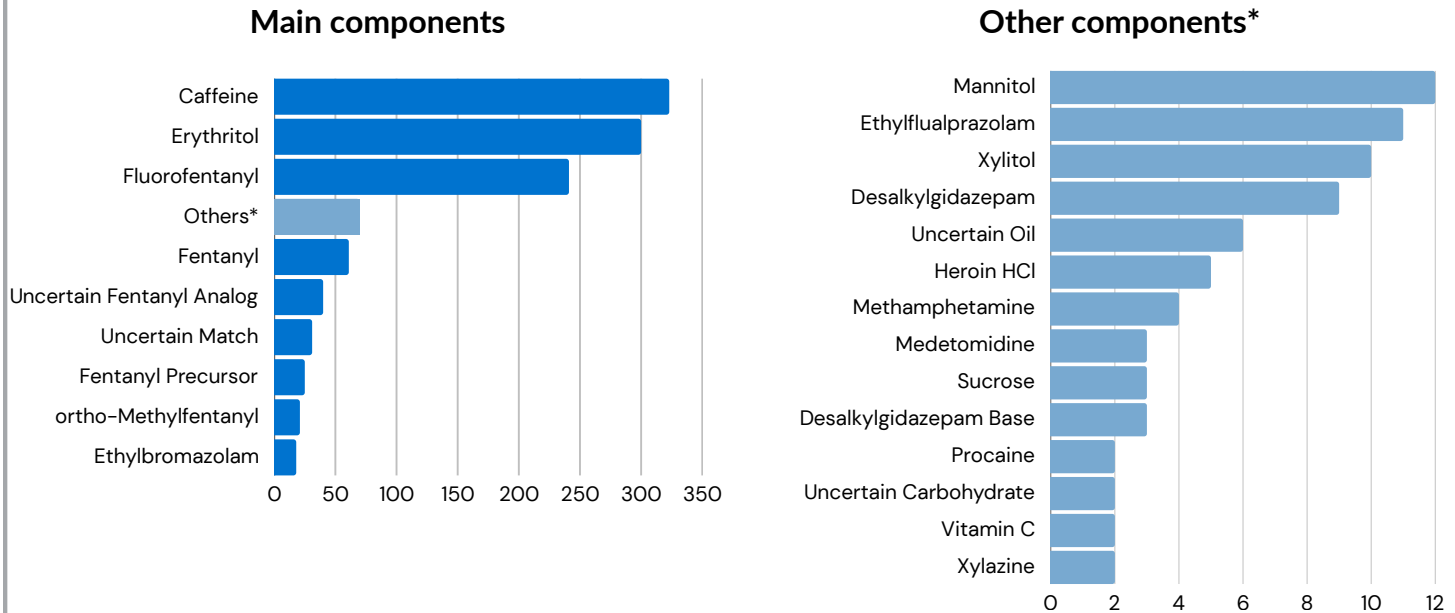
Opioids

Number of opioid samples with the expected drug present

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	36	0	0	36
Heroin	5	0	0	5
Down	343	7	0	350
Pharmaceutical	8	1	2	11
Opium	3	1	0	4
Total	395	9	2	406

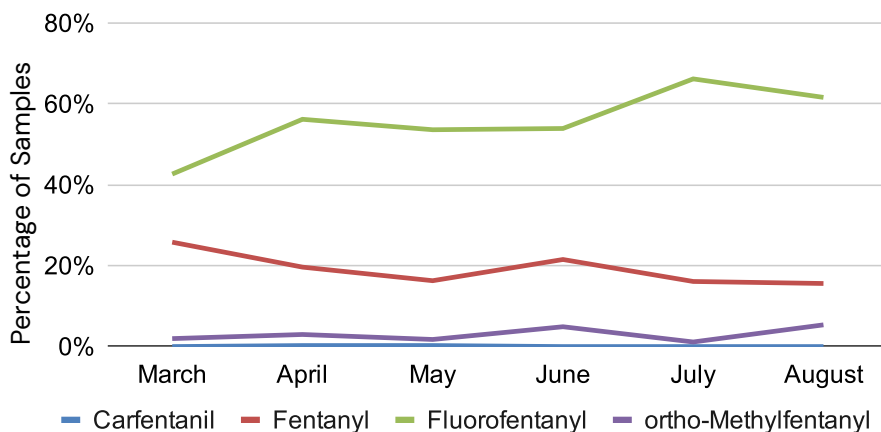
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents.
'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=391)



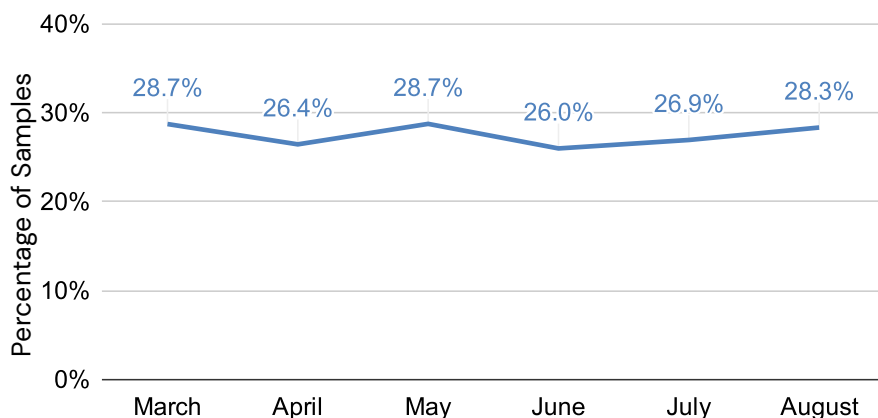
Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



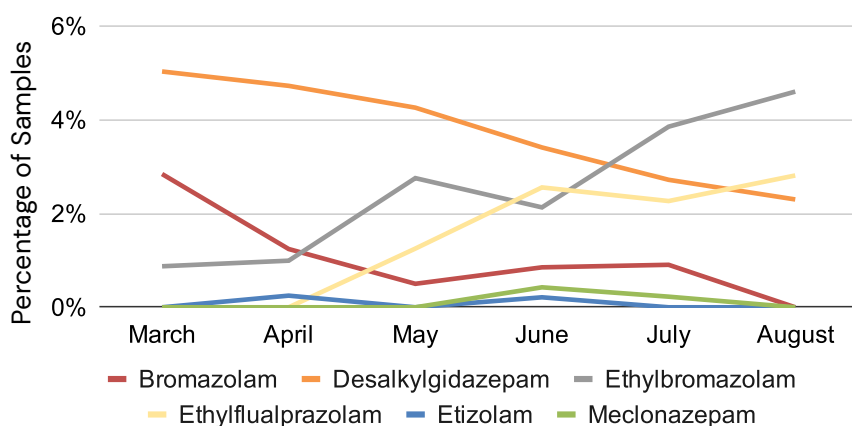
- In August, fentanyl detections by FTIR fell to a low of **15.6% (61 of 391 unregulated opioids checked)**. This decline may reflect that less fentanyl is circulating in the opioid supply, and/or that it is present in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%).
- Conversely, fluorofentanyl was detected in **66.2%** of unregulated opioids checked (**241 samples**).
- Carfentanil was not detected by FTIR this month. Its true prevalence is expected to be higher, as carfentanil is typically present at concentrations below the FTIR detection limit. See the **Secondary Testing** section for more information.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months



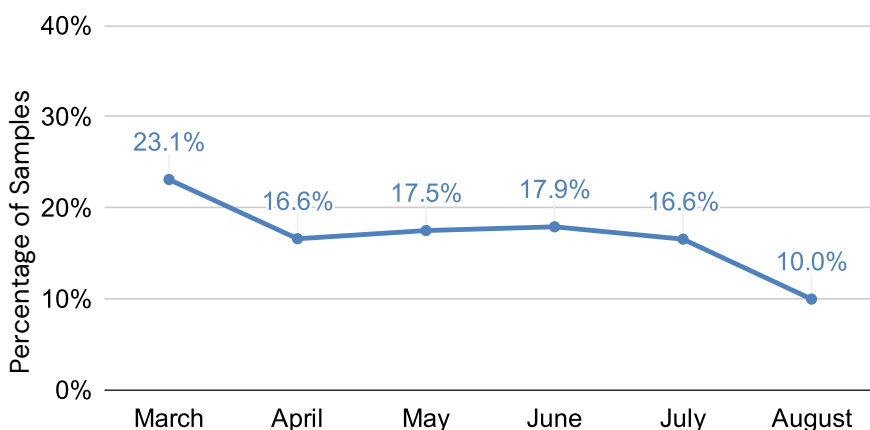
- During the month of August, the percentage of opioid samples testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to **28.3% (115 samples of 406 checked)**.
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The true percentage may be higher, as some benzodiazepines (e.g., etizolam, ethylflualprazolam) may be missed by test strip.

Types of benzodiazepines detected by FTIR, past 6 months



- In August, ethylbromazolam remained the most common benzodiazepine detected by FTIR in unregulated opioids (**4.6%, 18 samples**), followed by ethylflualprazolam, which surpassed desalkylgidazepam for the first time (**2.8% vs. 2.3%**, respectively).
- The increase in novel benzodiazepines marks a shift over the past 6 months, with desalkylgidazepam and bromazolam no longer being the predominant benzodiazepines in the region.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for medetomidine, past 6 months

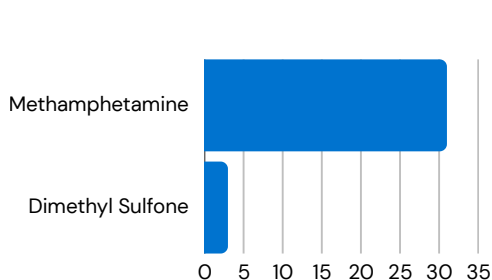


- Medetomidine positivity in opioids for August decreased to **10.0% (39 of 391)**.
- The majority of of opioid samples with medetomidine were also positive for benzodiazepines (**26 of 39**).
- BTNX medetomidine test strips are used in combination with FTIR. Medetomidine is typically present in low concentrations and may be missed by FTIR.

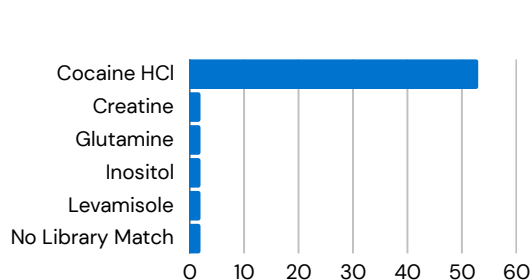
Non-Opioids

Components detected in stimulants

Components in methamphetamine (N=31)

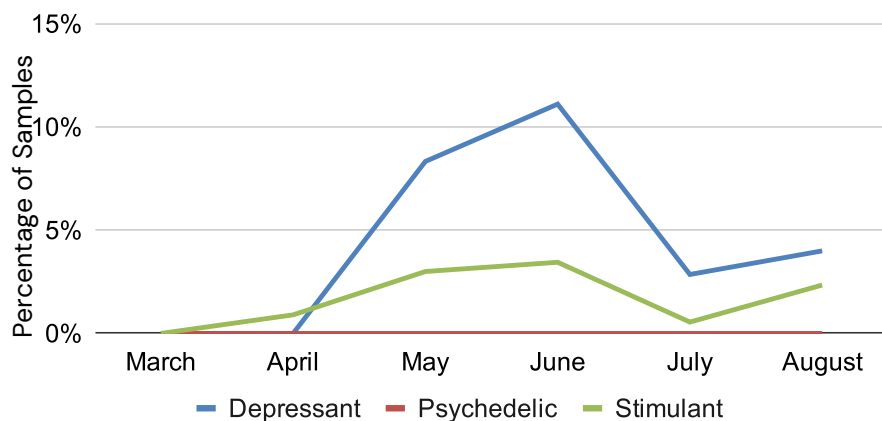


Components in cocaine (N=58)



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 August, **4.0%** of all depressants (1 medetomidine sample), and **2.3%** of all stimulants (2 methamphetamine, 1 crack cocaine sample) tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR/test strip.
- Of these, **2** 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](#).

No opioid samples were sent for PSMS secondary testing within the Vancouver Coastal region this month.

Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Alert Message
August 26, 2026 Vancouver	Down	Yellow powder seized in Vancouver tested positive for 4'-chlorodeschloroalprazolam, a novel benzodiazepine analog.
August 27, 2026 Vancouver	Xanax	White rectangular tri-scored counterfeit 2mg alprazolam (Xanax) tablet with imprints "XANAX" and "2" seized in Vancouver tested positive for ethylflualprazolam and phenazolam, two novel benzodiazepine analogs.

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](#).