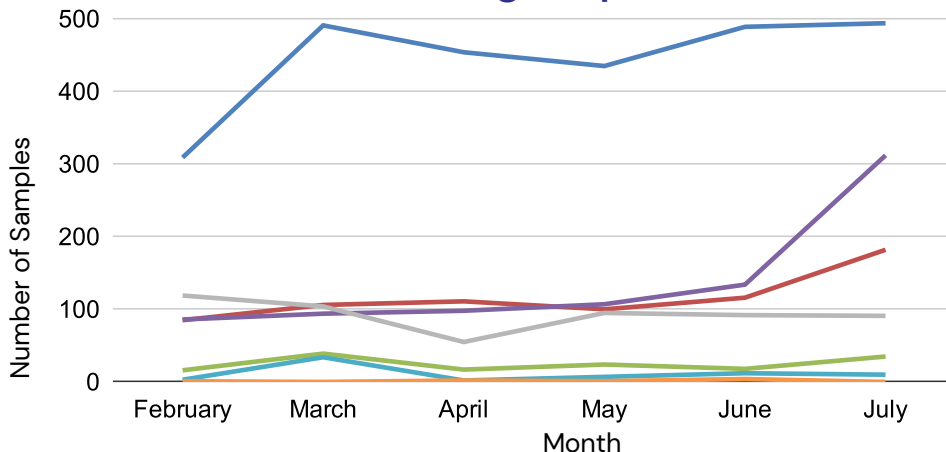




Key findings

- In July, **1,124** drug checks were performed by community FTIR drug checking sites in the Vancouver Coastal region (**11** access points). The increase in samples checked, particularly in the psychedelic category, is typical of the summer and festival season.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to **26.9%**. For the first time, ethylbromazolam, a novel benzodiazepine, was most frequently identified.
- We continue to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines in unregulated opioids. In addition to ethylbromazolam, ethylflualprazolam, and meclonazepam were also detected in July.
- The percentage of unregulated opioids testing positive for medetomidine decreased to **16.6%**. In response to emergence of medetomidine in the drug supply, Vancouver Coastal has implemented medetomidine test strips at all drug checking sites.
- Among opioids sent for secondary testing in July (**n=6**), medetomidine was detected in **5** samples, and carfentanil in **1** sample.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



Number of samples by drug category in July

Opioid	494
Stimulant	182
Depressant	35
Psychedelic	312
Other	10
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	91

Total: 1124

Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Insite (Vancouver)	1065
LIFT Community Services (Powell River)	19
Whistler Community Service Society (Squamish)	31
Whistler Community Service Society (Whistler)	6
Total	1121

Less than 5 samples were submitted to each of the following locations, 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	464	12	18	494
Stimulant	177	5	0	182
Depressant	24	10	1	35
Psychedelic	299	12	1	312
Other	5	2	3	10
Unknown	0	0	91	91
Total	969	41	114	1124

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

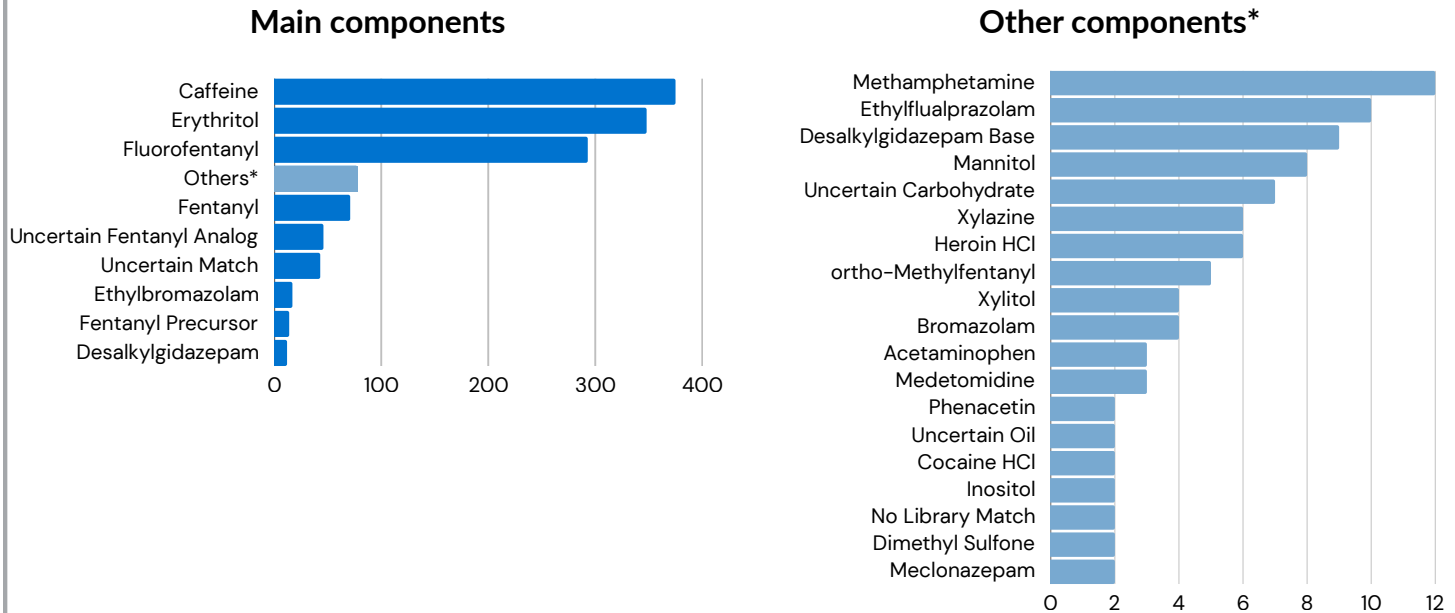
Opioids

Number of opioid samples with the expected drug present

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	25	4	0	29
Heroin	3	0	0	3
Down	401	7	1	409
Pharmaceutical	35	1	17	53
Total	464	12	18	494

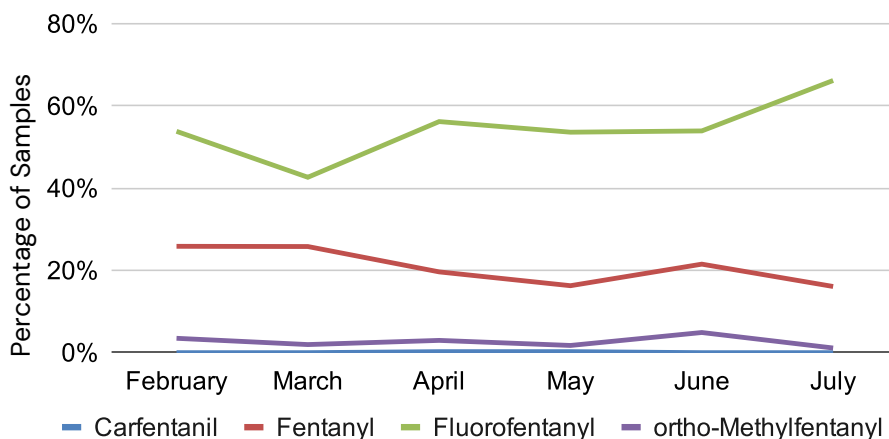
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents.
'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=441)



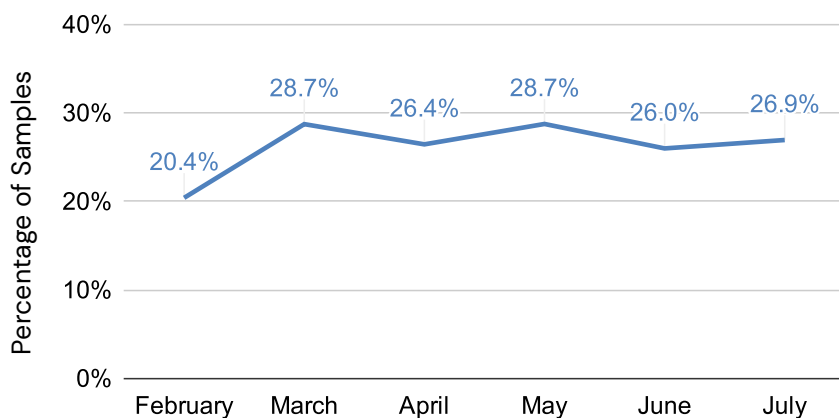
Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



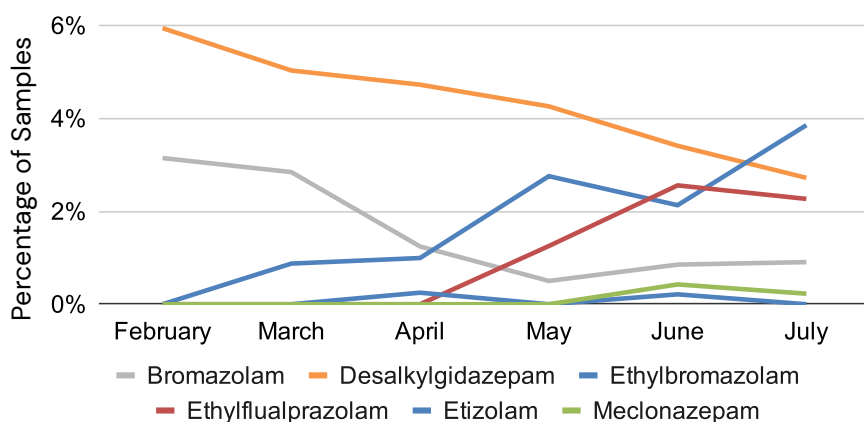
- In July, fentanyl detections by FTIR fell to a low of **16.1% (71 of 441)** unregulated opioids checked). This decline may reflect that less fentanyl is circulating in the opioid supply, and/or that it is present in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%).
- Conversely, fluorofentanyl detections rose to **66.2% (293 samples)**, the highest proportion to date.
- 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



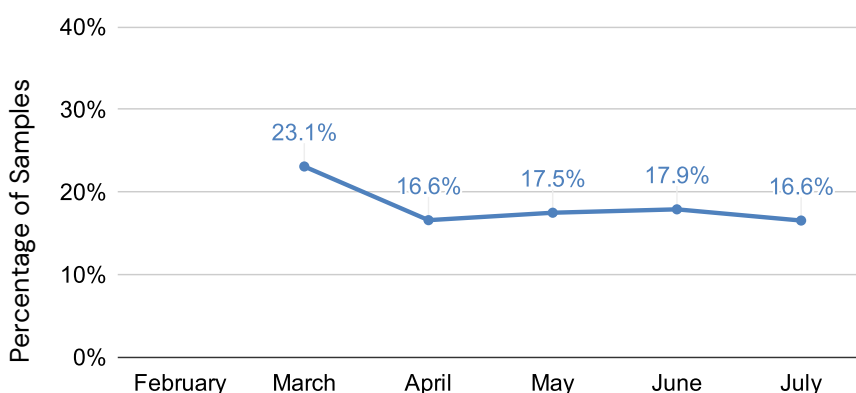
- During the month of July, the percentage of opioid samples testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to **26.9% (133 samples of 494 checked)**.
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The true percentage may be higher, as some benzodiazepines (e.g., etizolam, ethylflualprazolam) may be missed by test strip.

Types of benzodiazepines detected by FTIR, past 6 months



- In July, ethylbromazolam was the most common benzodiazepine detected in unregulated opioids by FTIR (**3.9%, 17 samples**), surpassing desalkylgidazepam (**2.7%; 12 samples**), for the first time.
- This marks a shift over the past 5 months as novel benzodiazepines, such as ethylbromazolam and ethylflualprazolam (**2.3%; 10 samples**), are detected more frequently. Meclonazepam, another novel benzodiazepine, was also detected in July.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for medetomidine, past 6 months

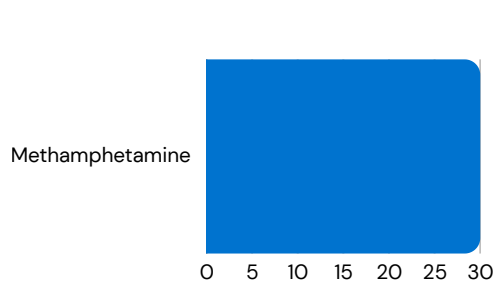


- During the month of July, the percentage of unregulated opioids testing positive for medetomidine decreased to **16.6% (73 of 441)**. Of these, half (**37 samples**) were also positive for benzodiazepines.
- Unregulated opioids are checked for medetomidine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the 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%).

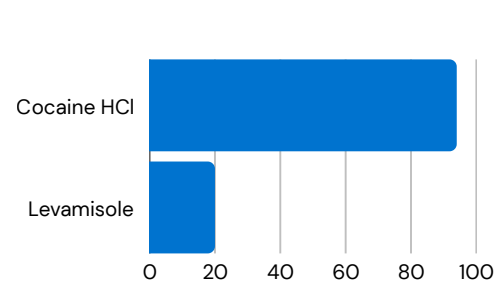
Non-Opioids

Components detected in stimulants

Components in methamphetamine (N=31)

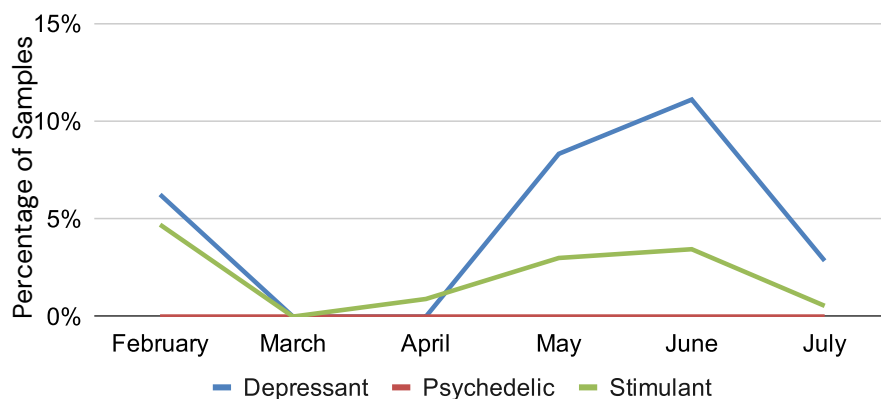


Components in cocaine (N=94)



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

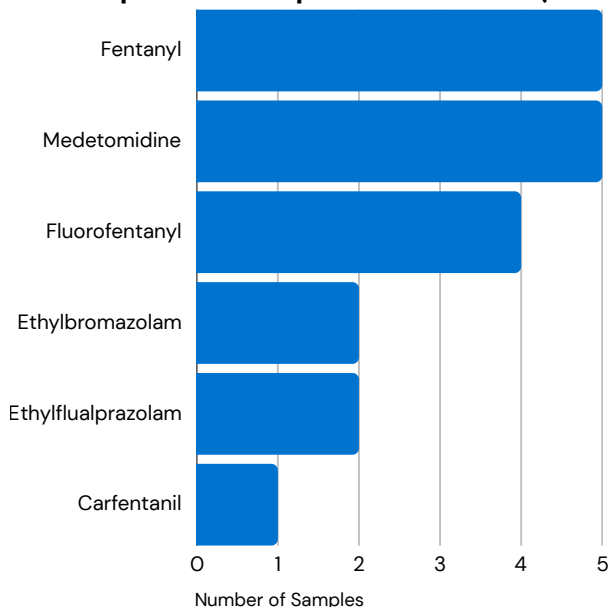


- In July, **2.9%** of all depressants (1 unknown benzodiazepine sample), and **0.5%** of all stimulants (1 methamphetamine sample) tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR/test strip.

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 = 6)



Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Alert Message
July 27, 2026 Vancouver	Down	Blue pebble sold as down in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver test positive for xylazine, fentanyl and para-fluorofentanyl.
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](#).