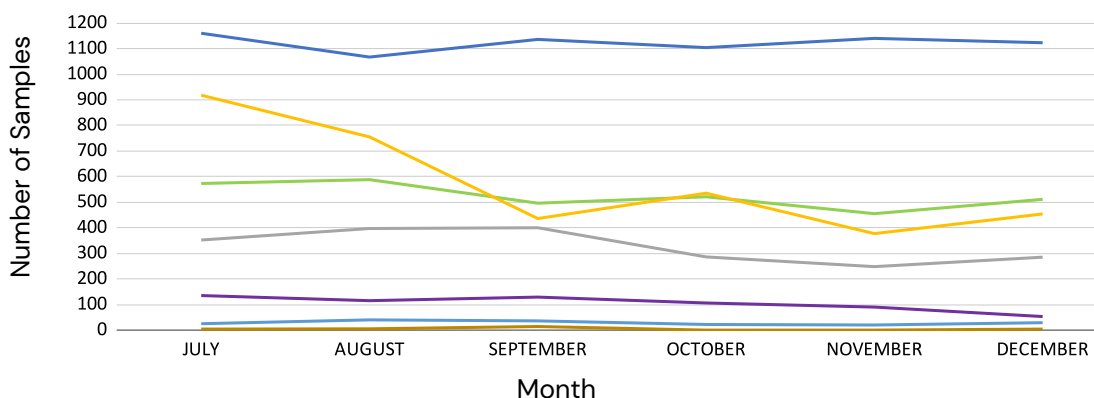




Key Findings

- In December, 2,459 drug checks were performed by community drug checking sites in BC (46 access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip increased from the previous month to 48.7% (547 of 1123 samples).
- The number of unregulated opioids containing benzodiazepines in concentrations high enough to be detected by FTIR reached an all-time high of 19.3% (205 of 1060 samples). Of these, desalkylgidazepam was most frequently identified (117 samples), surpassing bromazolam for the second month in a row.
- Fentanyl was detected by FTIR in 35.8% of unregulated opioids (379 of 1060 samples), whereas fluorofentanyl was detected in 17.4% (184 samples). Ortho-methylfentanyl was detected in 13.3% (141 samples).
- The median fentanyl concentration of unregulated opioids was 17.6%. See page 3 for more detailed results.
- 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	1123
● Stimulant	511
● Depressant	53
● Psychedelic	454
● Other	29
● Polysubstance	4
● Unknown	285

Total: 2,459

Number of samples tested by region:

Vancouver Coastal Health region: 1,579 (64%)

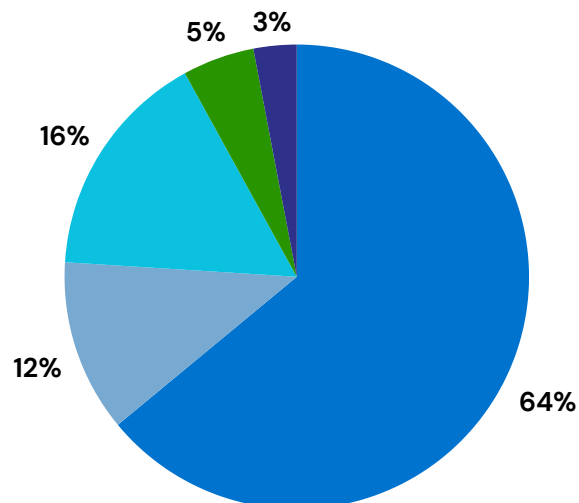
Fraser Health region: 298 (12%)

Interior Health region: 394 (16%)

Vancouver Island Health region: 129 (5%)

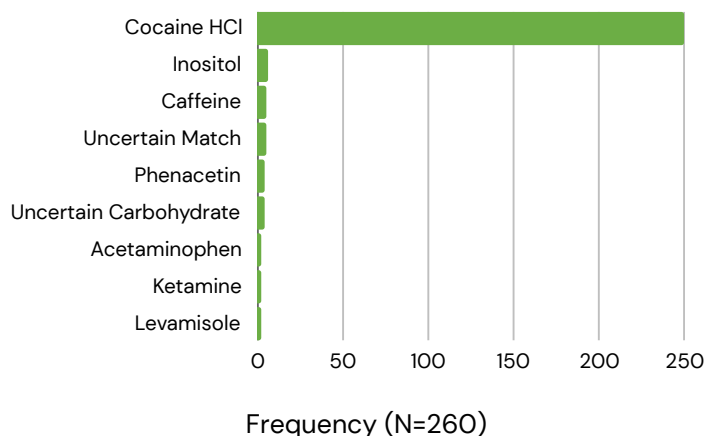
Northern Health region: 59 (3%)

Total: 2,459

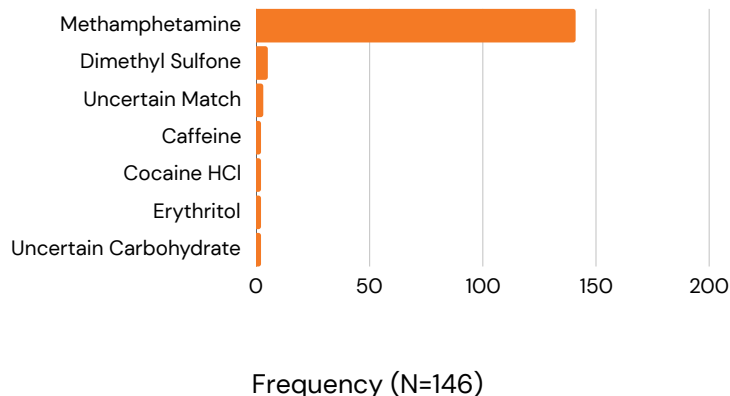


Components found in drug samples in December

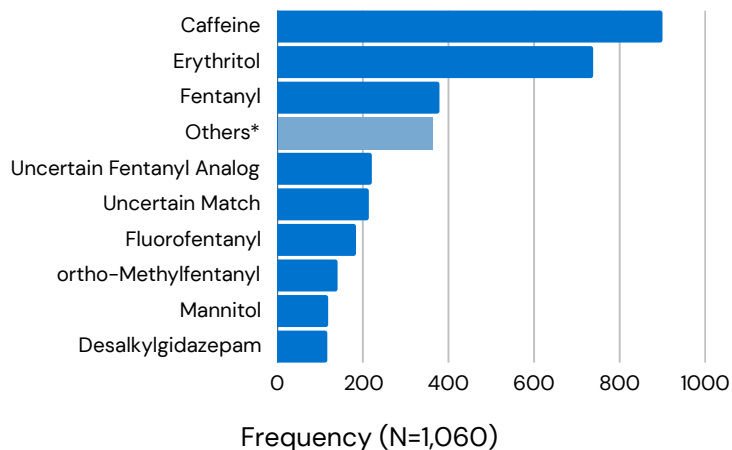
Components in cocaine



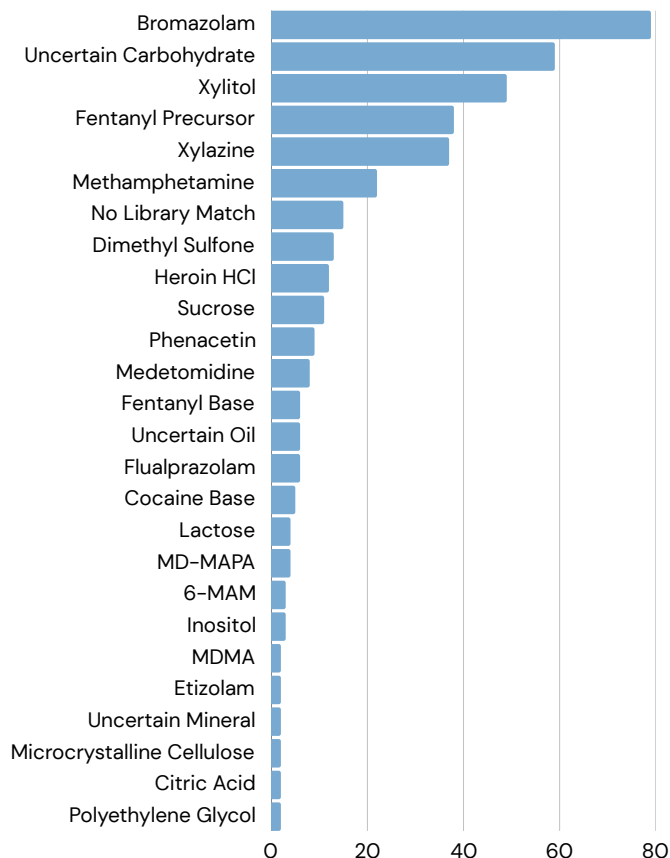
Components in methamphetamine



Components in unregulated opioids



*Other components in unregulated opioids

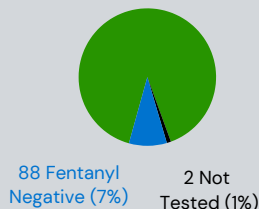


There were additional compounds detected a single time each. To save space, they have been omitted from these charts. For the full list of compounds detected, visit our data dashboard at www.drugcheckingbc.ca/dashboard/

Number of samples tested with **fentanyl** present

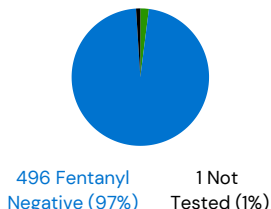
1123 Opioid samples

1033 Fentanyl Positive (92%)



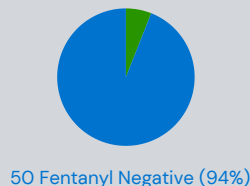
511 Stimulant samples

14 Fentanyl Positive (2%)



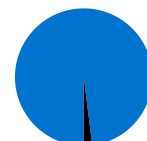
53 Depressant samples

3 Fentanyl Positive (6%)



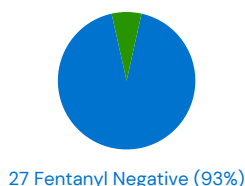
454 Psychedelic samples

452 Fentanyl Negative (99%)
2 Not Tested (1%)



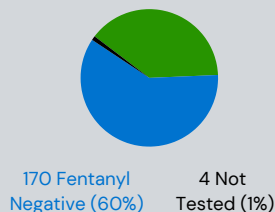
29 Other samples

2 Fentanyl Positive (7%)



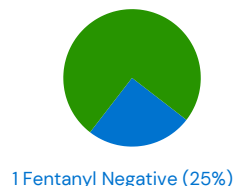
285 Unknown samples

111 Fentanyl Positive (39%)

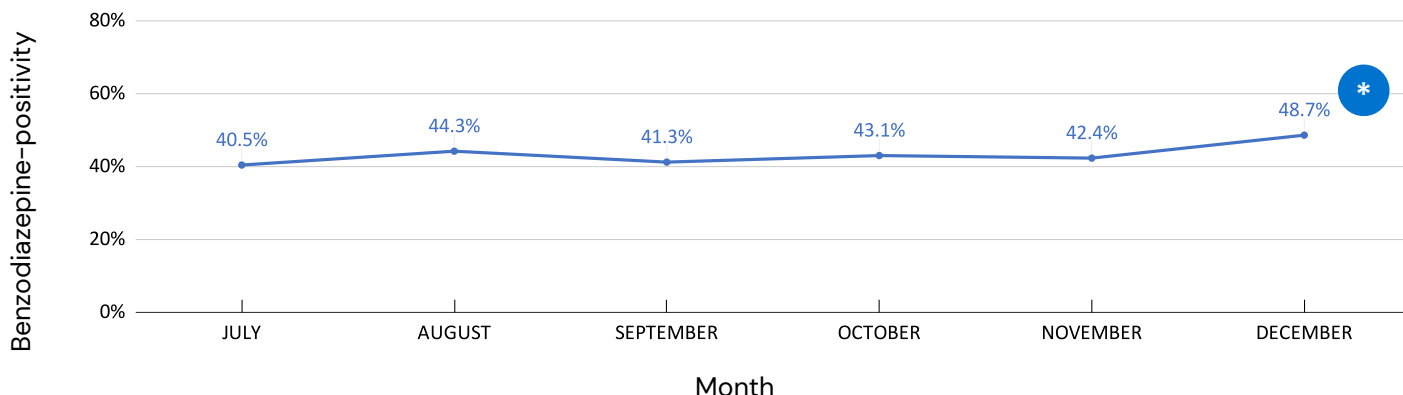


4 Polysubstance samples

3 Fentanyl Positive (75%)



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

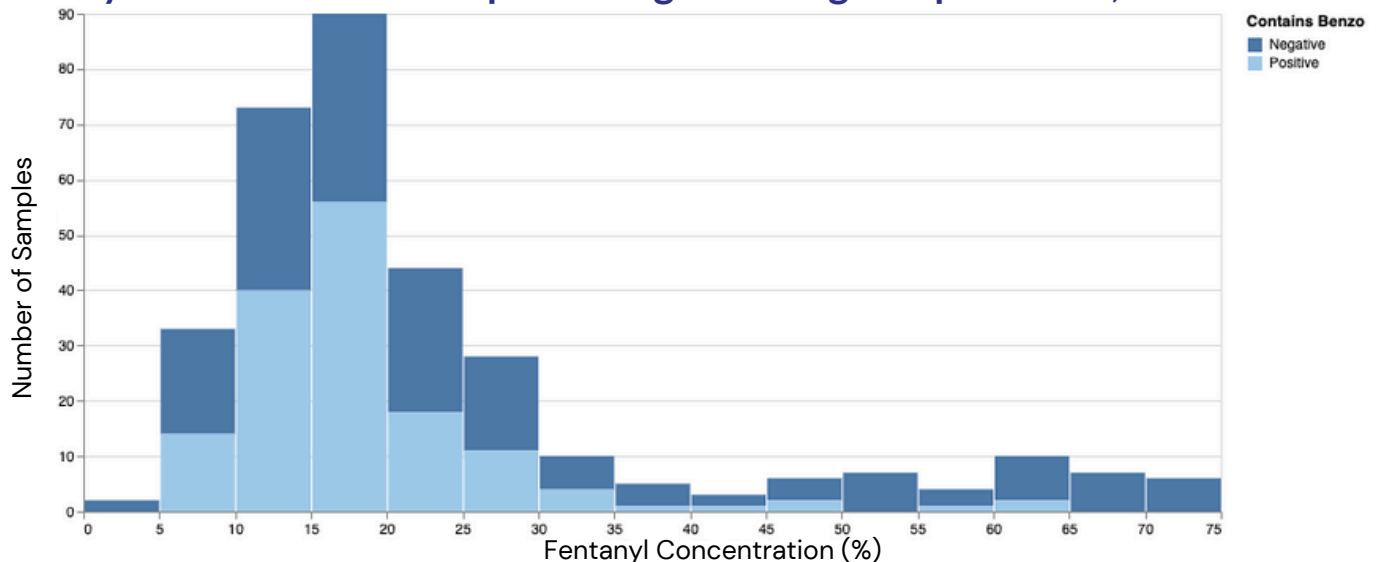


*During the month of December, **48.7%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in our partner sites around BC (**547 samples of 1123 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here are derived from both of these technologies and are presumptive until confirmed by a laboratory.

Fentanyl Concentration

The charts below summarize fentanyl concentrations of unregulated opioid samples brought for drug checking in British Columbia. Technicians at point-of-care may provide an estimated fentanyl quantification, but these results were calculated separately (post hoc) using the model for the purpose of this report.

Fentanyl Concentration of Opioid Drug Checking Samples in BC, December 2024

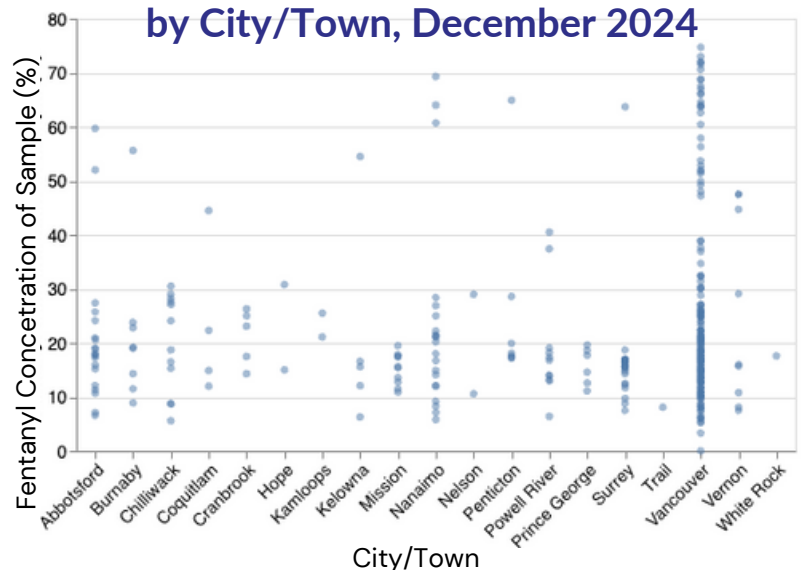


Median fentanyl concentration in all unregulated opioid samples in December: 17.6%. Most unregulated opioid samples contain fentanyl at concentrations between 15% and 25%, but can range from trace amounts to above 75% of the mixture. As of August 2024, we have revised the model to exclude samples that contain any other fentanyl analogues, with or without fentanyl present.









Drug supplies vary by location in the province. Denser points on this chart indicate a greater number of samples containing fentanyl at the concentration displayed. We note that the locations pictured here include only drug checking services partnered with the BCCSU Drug Checking Program, and may not represent the broader drug supply or the supply in other settings.

If you have any questions about the results, please email us at drugchecking@bccsu.ubc.ca.

Fentanyl Concentration of Opioid Samples by City/Town, December 2024










Number of samples with expected drug present

Expected Drug		Present	Not Present	N/A	Total
Opioid		1064	45	14	1123
Stimulant		484	26	1	511
Psychedelic		426	27	1	454
Unknown		0	0	285	285
Depressant		35	15	3	53
Other		24	2	3	29
Polysubstance		3	1	0	4
TOTAL		2036	116	307	2459

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		860	14	1	875
Fentanyl		154	13	2	169
Pharmaceutical		31	10	11	52
Heroin		9	7	0	16
Opium		10	0	0	10
Other Opioid		0	1	0	1
TOTAL		1064	45	14	1123

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.

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.

Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
December 3, 2024 Williams Lake	Fentanyl/Down	Erythritol, Caffeine, Isotonitazene, Uncertain Match	Negative	Positive	White powdery substance sold as fentanyl/down in Williams Lake contains nitazene (synthetic opioid) and does not contain fentanyl. Fentanyl test strips will not detect nitazene. Risk for overdose. Naloxone remains effective.
December 3, 2024 Williams Lake	Fentanyl/Down	Caffeine, Xylitol, Erythritol, Fentanyl, Para-Fluorofentanyl	Positive	Positive	Green/yellow crystal chunks sold as fentanyl/down in Williams Lake associated with multiple overdoses.
December 6, 2024 Prince George	Down	Fentanyl, Carfentanil, Bromazolam, Caffeine*	N/A	N/A	Red chunk sold as down tested positive for fentanyl, carfentanil and high levels of bromazolam (benzo) in Prince George, has been linked with overdoses.
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 12, 2024 Fraser Health region	Down/Fentanyl (Multiple samples)	See alert description*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples in different colors and textures, containing several fentanyl analogs (including carfentanil), benzodiazepines, veterinary tranquilizers (tranq), and nitazenes (a group of potent opioids), were tested throughout the Fraser Health region. Combining multiple depressants can lead to complex overdoses.
December 13, 2024 Trail	Down	Carfentanil, Fentanyl, Bromazolam*	N/A	N/A	Purple substance sold as down tested positive for carfentanil, fentanyl, and bromazolam in Trail.
December 13, 2024 Penticton	Down	Medetomidine, Fentanyl, Caffeine, Erythritol*	N/A	N/A	Purple substance sold as down tested positive for medetomidine and fentanyl in Penticton.
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.

Public Health Notifications Cont.

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
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.

*Results provided by complementary testing partner Substance using Paper Spray Mass Spectrometry, all other spectrometry results are determined by FTIR.

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:

