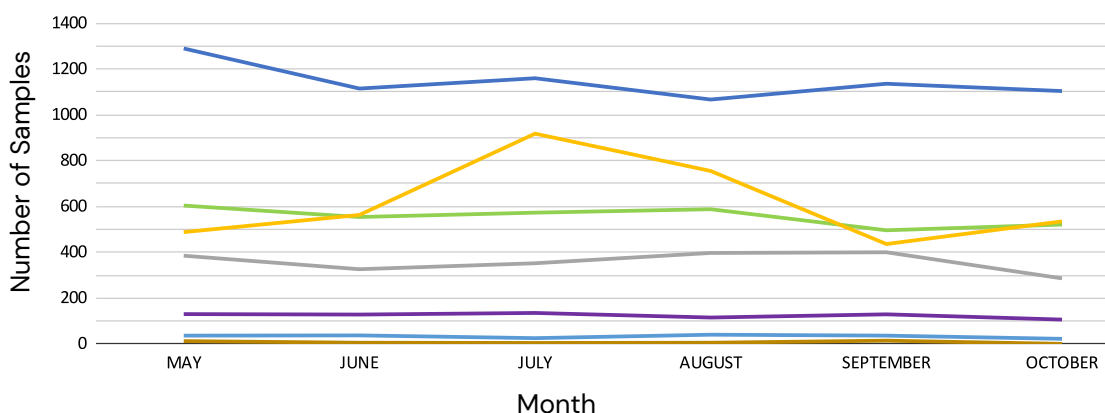




Key Findings

- In October, 2,574 drug checks were performed by community drug checking sites in BC (45 access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip was 43.1% (476 of 1104 samples). The true rate may be higher as benzo-like substances such as etizolam are not reliably detected by test strips.
- Benzodiazepines were detected by FTIR in 13.0% of unregulated opioids (135 of 1041 samples), indicating their presence in higher concentrations. Bromazolam was most frequently detected (83 samples), followed by desalkylgidazepam, which increased in detection this month (46 samples).
- Fentanyl was the most common fentanyl analog detected by FTIR (39.9%; 415 of 1041 samples), followed by fluorofentanyl (24.4%; 254 samples). The number of samples containing ortho-methylfentanyl increased compared to previous months (15.9%; 166 samples).
- The median fentanyl concentration of unregulated opioids was 18.7%. 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 Oct.

● Opioid	1104
● Stimulant	521
● Depressant	106
● Psychedelic	535
● Other	22
● Polysubstance	0
● Unknown	286
Total:	2,574

Number of samples tested by region:

Vancouver Coastal Health region: 1,562 (61%)

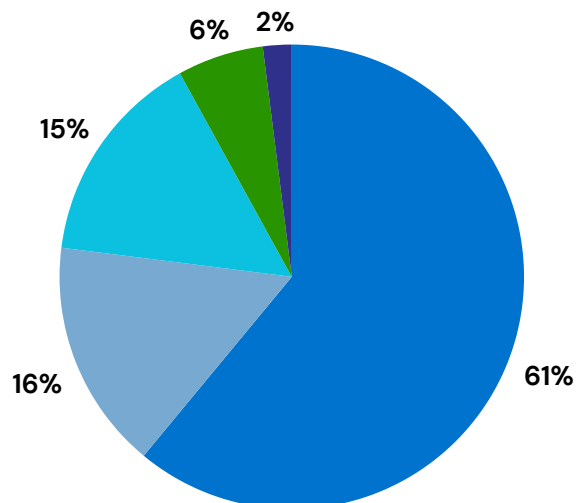
Fraser Health region: 418 (16%)

Interior Health region: 384 (15%)

Vancouver Island Health region: 148 (6%)

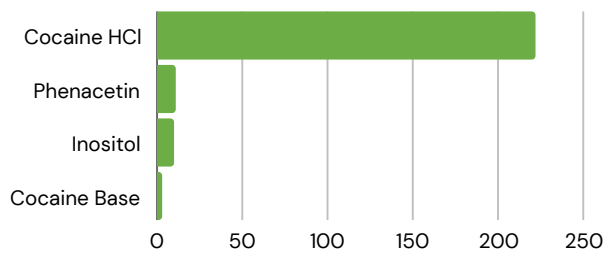
Northern Health region: 62 (2%)

Total: 2,574



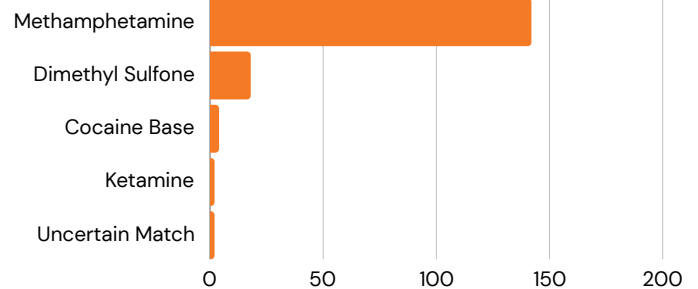
Components found in drug samples in October

Components in cocaine



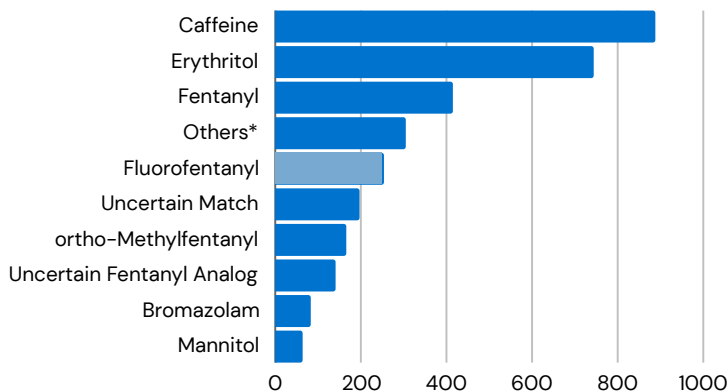
Frequency (N=230)

Components in methamphetamine



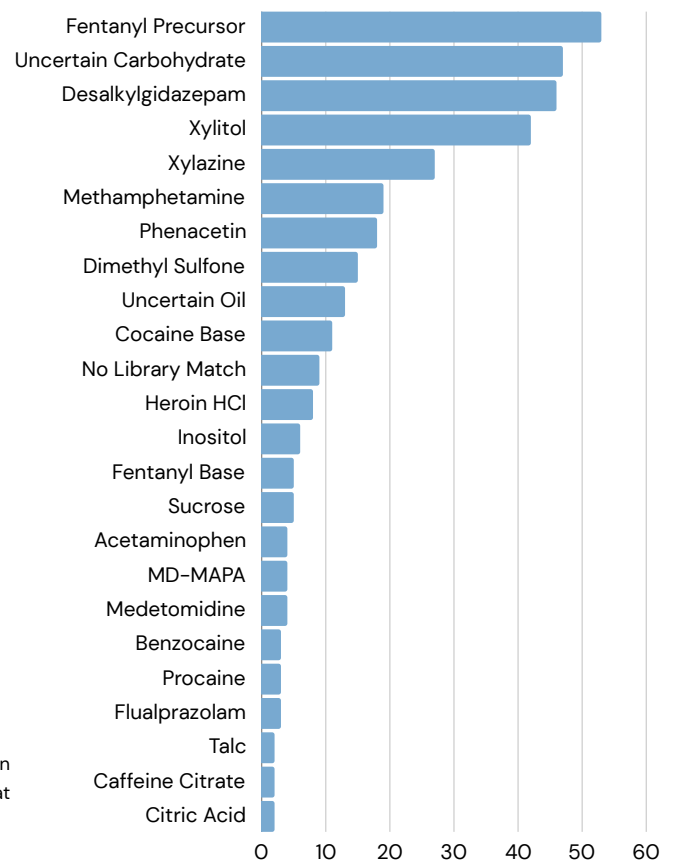
Frequency (N=151)

Components in unregulated opioids



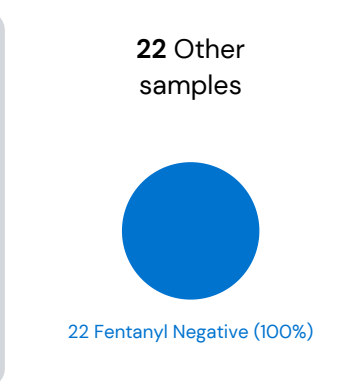
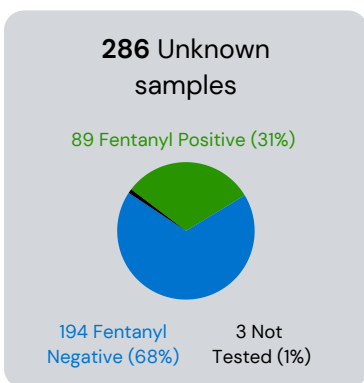
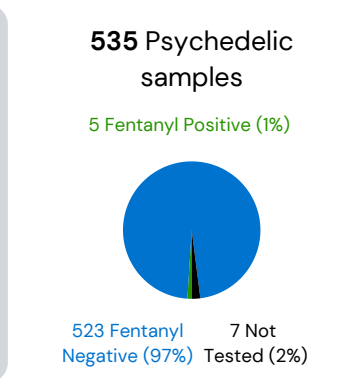
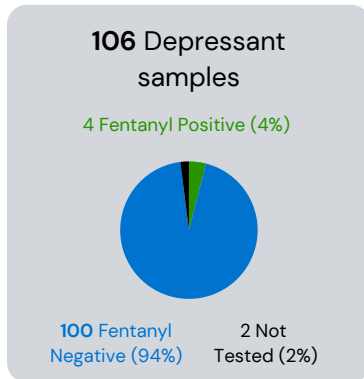
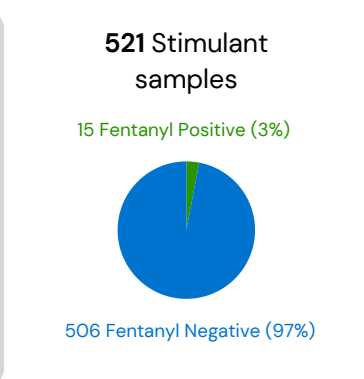
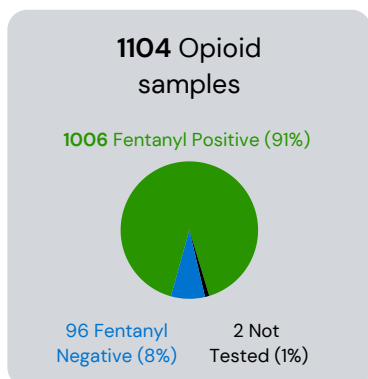
Frequency (N=1,041)

*Other components in unregulated opioids

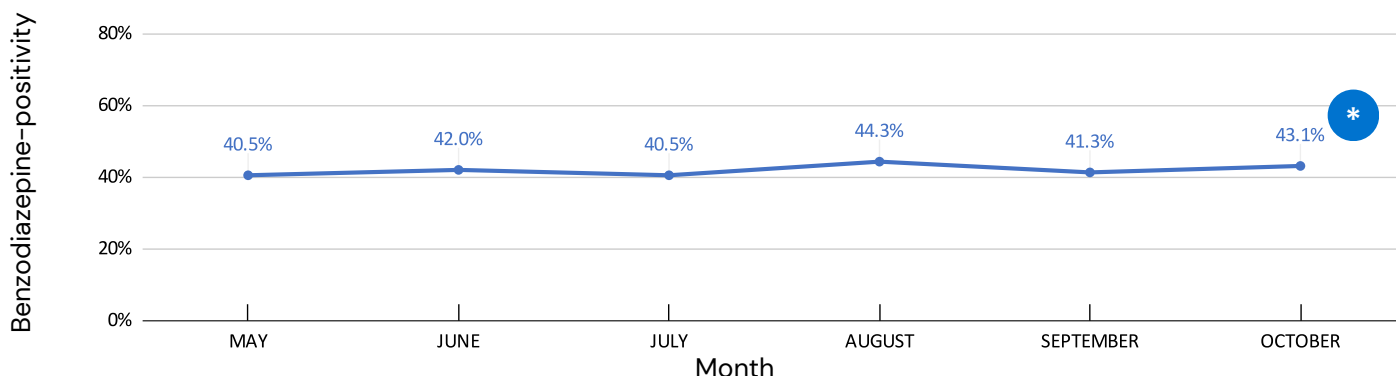


There were additional compounds detected a single time each. To save space, they have been omitted from these charts. For the full list of compounds detected, visit our data dashboard at www.drugcheckingbc.ca/dashboard/

Number of samples tested with **fentanyl present**



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

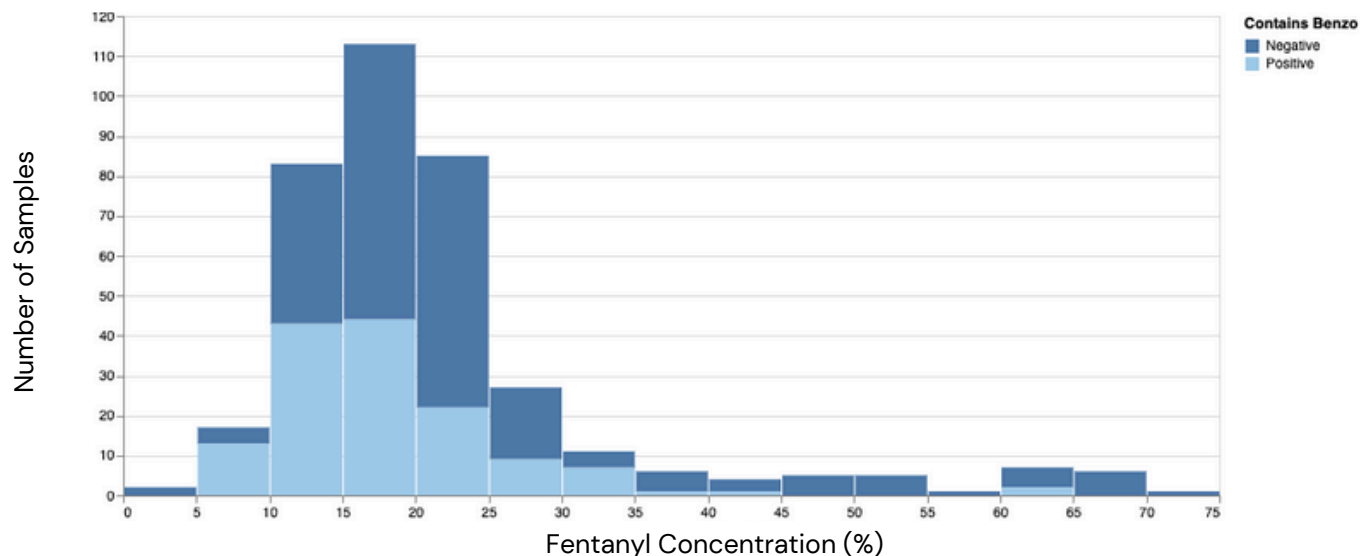


*During the month of October, **43.1%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in our partner sites around BC (**476 samples of 1104 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here 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, October 2024

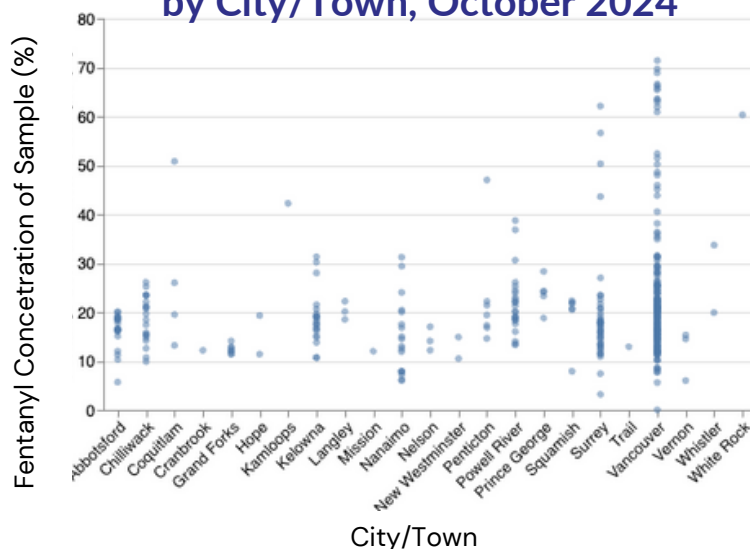


Median fentanyl concentration in all unregulated opioid samples in October: 18.7%. Most unregulated opioid samples contain fentanyl at concentrations between 15% and 25%, but can range from trace amounts to above 75% of the mixture. As of August 2024, we have revised the model to exclude samples that 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, October 2024



Number of samples with expected drug present

Expected Drug		Present	Not Present	N/A	Total
Opioid		1039	50	15	1104
Psychedelic		493	28	14	535
Stimulant		492	26	3	521
Unknown		0	0	286	286
Depressant		65	40	1	106
Other		16	5	1	22
TOTAL		2105	149	320	2574

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		884	17	1	902
Fentanyl		112	6	1	119
Pharmaceutical		20	13	13	46
Heroin		7	13	0	20
Opium		16	1	0	17
TOTAL		1039	50	15	1104

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 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
October 1, 2024 Vancouver	Oxycodone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, N-Propionyl-Para-Fluorofentanyl	Negative	Positive	Green pressed pill with imprint "OCD 80/APO" sold as oxycodone in Vancouver tested positive for benzos and n-propionyl-para-fluorofentanyl, a chemical involved in the production of fentanyl analogs with unknown opioid activity. Substance tested negative for oxycodone.
October 2, 2024 Vancouver	Oxycodone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Fentanyl, Xylazine, Uncertain Oil	Positive	Negative	Blue tablet with imprint "M/30" sold as oxycodone in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and xylazine, and negative for oxycodone.
October 4, 2024 Squamish	Cocaine	Cocaine	Positive	N/A	White powder sold as cocaine in Squamish tested positive for cocaine and fentanyl.
October 9, 2024 Squamish	Fentanyl	Fentanyl, Caffeine, Bromazolam, Erythritol	Positive	Positive	Beige chunks sold as fentanyl in Squamish tested positive for fentanyl and bromazolam, a benzo analog. Substance has caused overdose.
October 15, 2024 Vancouver	Fentanyl	Medetomidine, Uncertain Carbohydrate, Uncertain Match	Negative	Negative	White powder sold as fentanyl in Vancouver tested positive for medetomidine and negative for fentanyl.
October 18, 2024 Vancouver	2C-B	2C-B	Positive	Negative	White powder sold in Vancouver as 2C-B, a synthetic psychedelic drug, tested positive for 2C-B and fentanyl.
October 23, 2024 Vancouver	Down	Fentanyl, Bromazolam, Medetomidine, Caffeine*	N/A	N/A	Beige chunks sold as down in the downtown eastside of Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl, bromazolam, and medetomidine, a veterinary sedative more toxic than xylazine.
October 25, 2024 Vancouver	Crack Cocaine	Cocaine Base, Xylazine	Negative	Negative	White pebble sold as crack cocaine in Vancouver tested positive for cocaine and xylazine.

Public Health Notifications Cont.

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
October 31, 2024 qathet (Powell River)	Down	Fentanyl, Xylazine, Bromazolam, Flubromazepam*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples sold as down in qathet (Powell River) region tested positive for fentanyl and xylazine (pink pebbles), or fentanyl, benzos, and xylazine (red granules, purple chunk).

*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:

