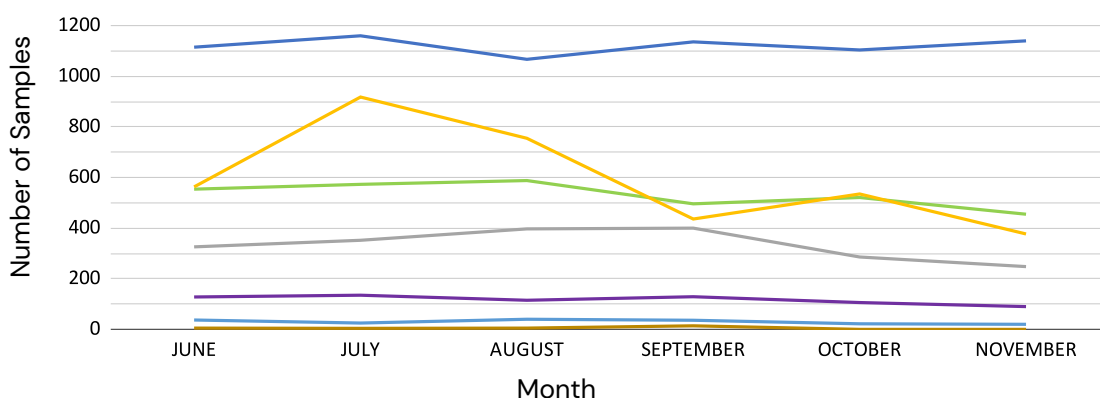




Key Findings

- In November, 2,330 drug checks were performed by community drug checking sites in BC (44 access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip was 42.4% (483 of 1140 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were detected by FTIR in 16.1% of unregulated opioids (173 of 1072 samples), indicating their presence in higher concentrations. Of these, desalkylgidazepam was most frequently identified (105 samples), surpassing bromazolam for the first time.
- Fentanyl was detected by FTIR in 37.3% of unregulated opioids (400 of 1072 samples), whereas fluorofentanyl was detected in 22.1% (237 samples). Over the past two months the number of samples containing ortho-methylfentanyl has increased, rising to 16.1% in November (173 samples).
- The median fentanyl concentration of unregulated opioids was 18.9%. 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 Nov.

Opioid	1140
Stimulant	455
Depressant	90
Psychedelic	377
Other	20
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	248

Total: 2,330

Number of samples tested by region:

Vancouver Coastal Health region: 1,393 (60%)

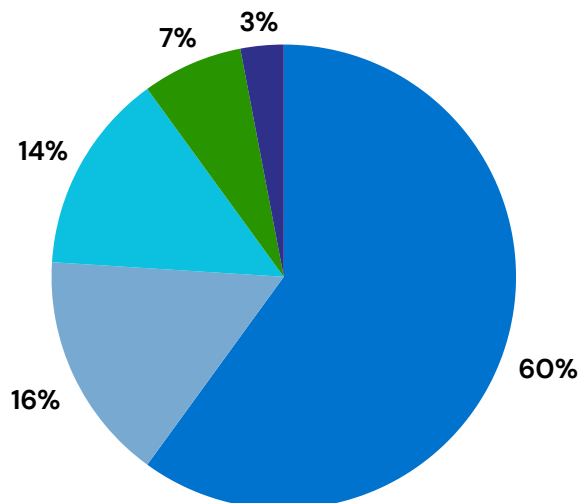
Fraser Health region: 380 (16%)

Interior Health region: 330 (14%)

Vancouver Island Health region: 163 (7%)

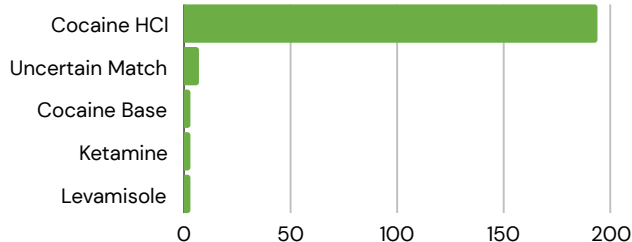
Northern Health region: 64 (3%)

Total: 2,330



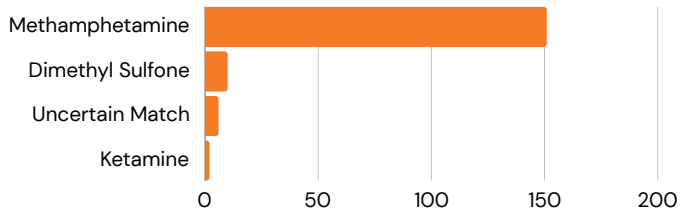
Components found in drug samples in November

Components in cocaine



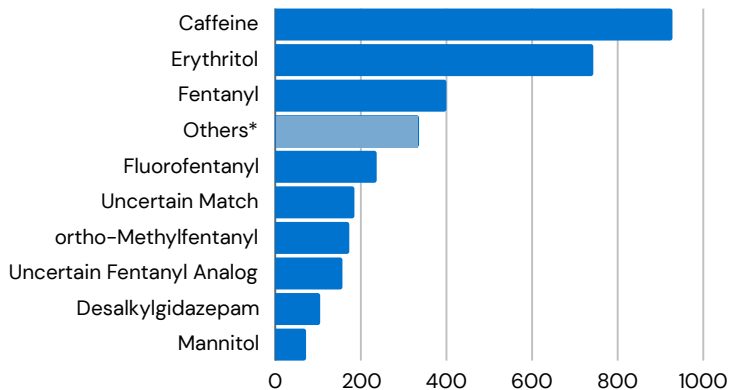
Frequency (N=198)

Components in methamphetamine



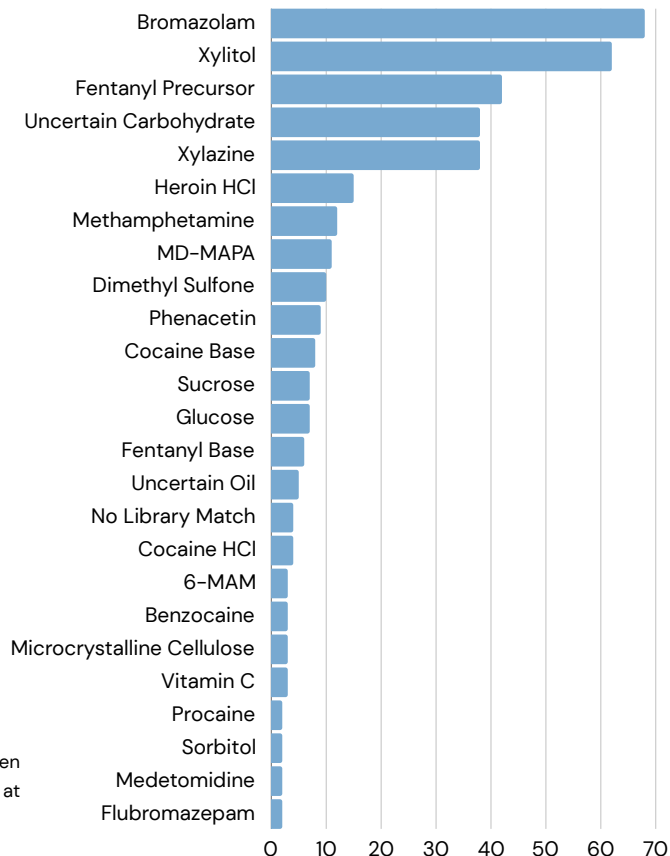
Frequency (N=154)

Components in unregulated opioids



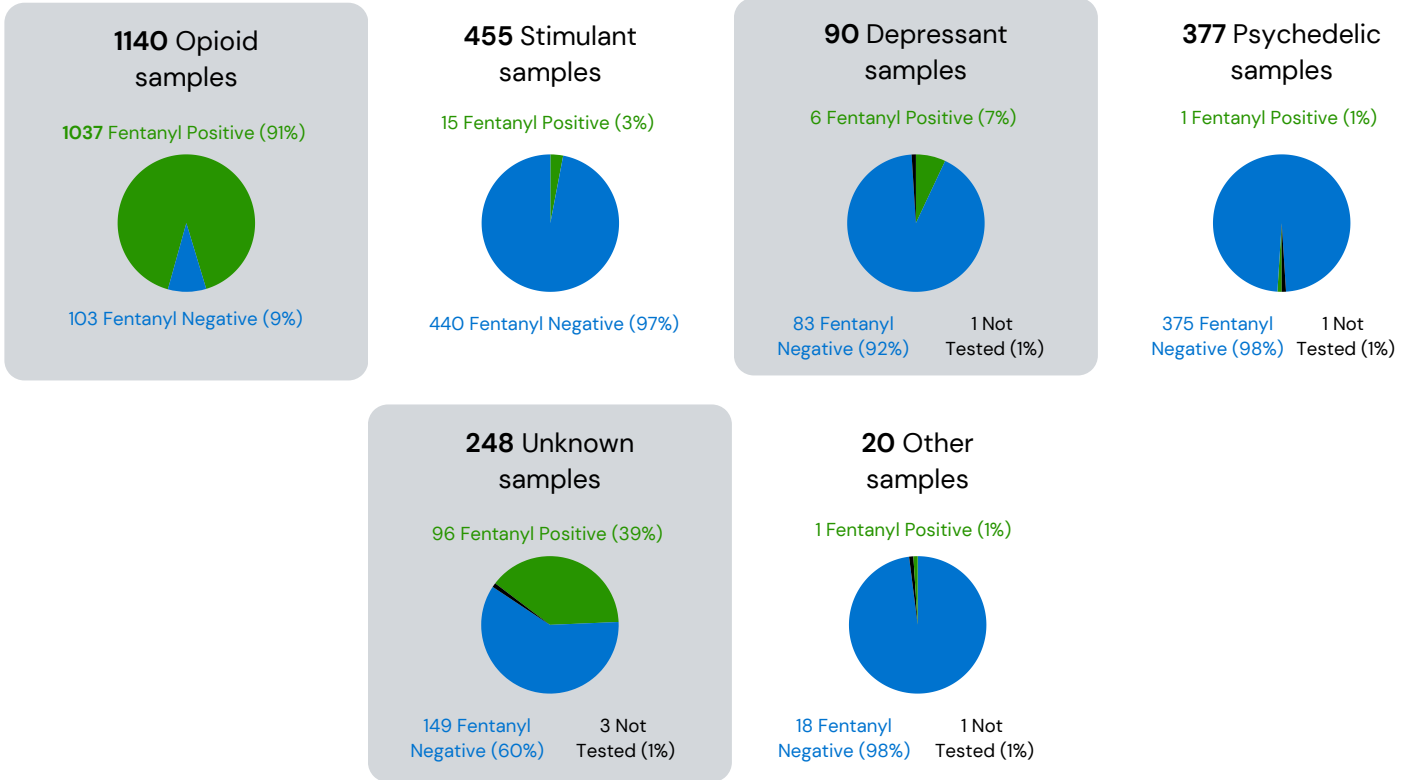
Frequency (N=1,072)

*Other components in unregulated opioids

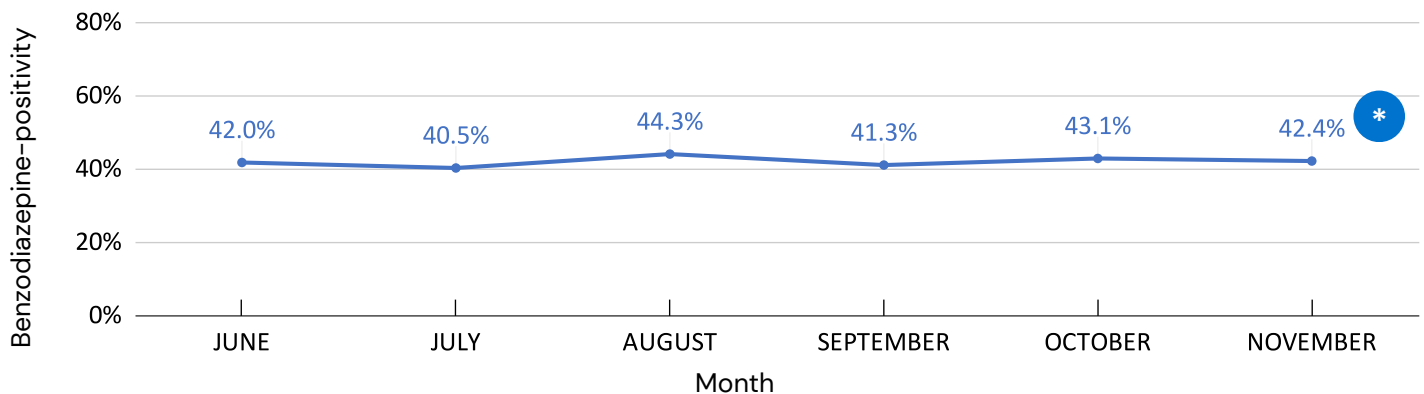


There were additional compounds detected a single time each. To save space, they have been omitted from these charts. For the full list of compounds detected, visit our data dashboard at www.drugcheckingbc.ca/dashboard/

Number of samples tested with **fentanyl present**



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

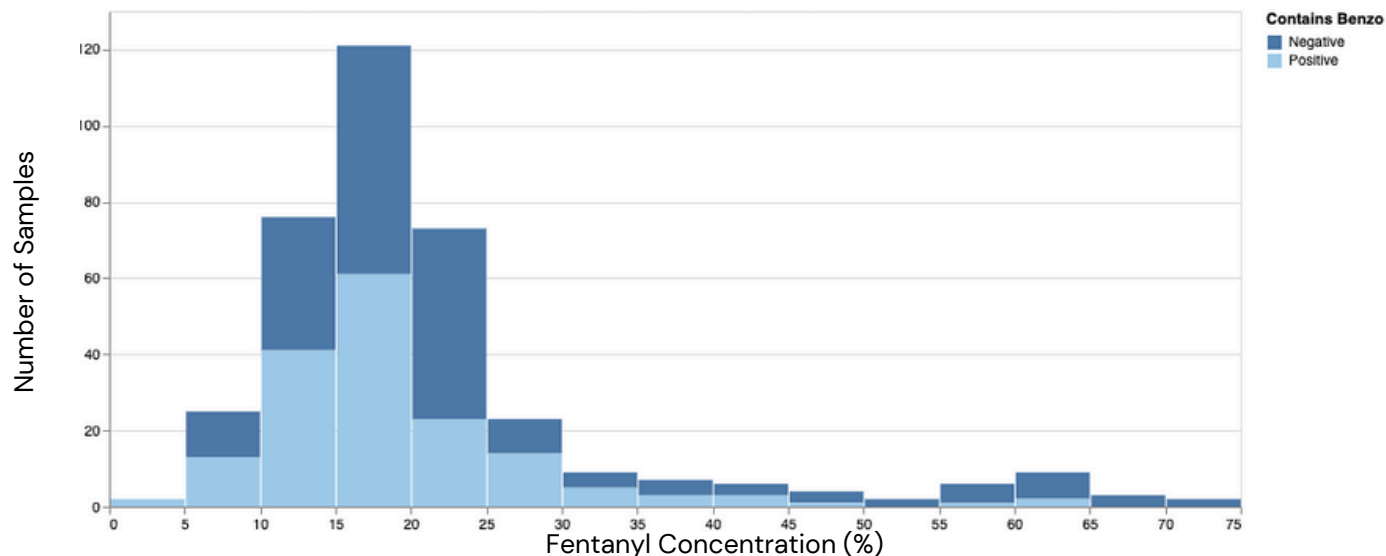


*During the month of November, **42.4%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in our partner sites around BC (**483 samples of 1140 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here 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, November 2024

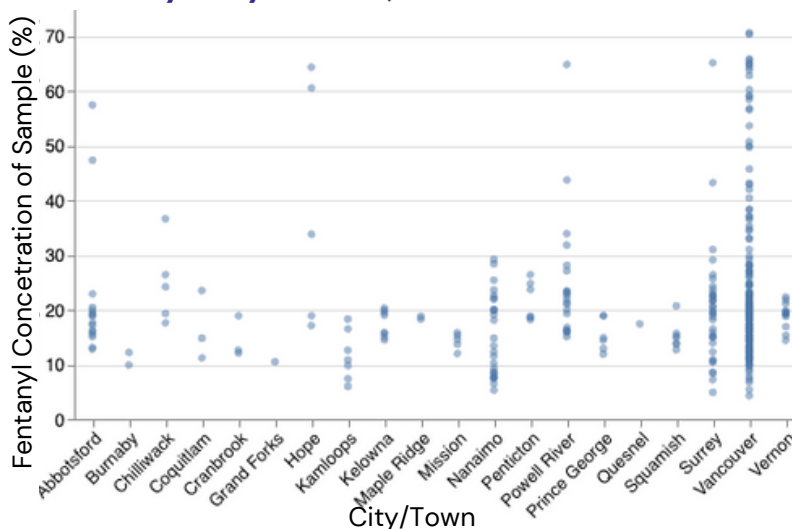


Median fentanyl concentration in all unregulated opioid samples in November: 18.9%. Most unregulated opioid samples contain fentanyl at concentrations between 15% and 25%, but can range from trace amounts to above 75% of the mixture. As of August 2024, we have revised the model to exclude samples that 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, November 2024



Number of samples with expected drug present

Expected Drug		Present	Not Present	N/A	Total
Opioid		1072	51	17	1140
Psychedelic		441	14	0	455
Stimulant		352	18	7	377
Unknown		0	0	248	248
Depressant		50	38	2	90
Other		17	2	1	20
TOTAL		1932	123	275	2330

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		865	21	1	887
Fentanyl		159	5	0	164
Pharmaceutical		30	11	15	56
Heroin		9	11	1	21
Opium		9	0	0	9
Other Opioid		0	3	0	3
TOTAL		1072	51	17	1140

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
November 1, 2024 Vancouver	Alprazolam (Xanax)	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Uncertain Oil, Xylazine	Negative	Negative	White rectangular pressed pill with imprint "XANAX" sold as alprazolam (Xanax) in Vancouver tested positive for xylazine and negative for alprazolam.
November 1, 2024 qathet (Powell River)	MDMA	Caffeine, Fentanyl	Positive	Negative	Blue powder sold as MDMA in the qathet region (Powell River) tested positive for fentanyl and negative for MDMA. Substance has caused multiple overdoses.
November 1, 2024 Prince George	Down	Fentanyl, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	Purple drug sold as down tested positive for high levels of fentanyl and bromazolam (benzo), drug linked to increase overdoses in Prince George.
November 12, 2024 Vancouver	Unknown	Erythritol, Caffeine, Xylazine, Fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Purple chunk purchased in Vancouver tested positive for xylazine, fentanyl, and benzos.
November 20, 2024 qathet (Powell River)	Down	Fentanyl, Fluorofentanyl, Ortho-Methylfentanyl, Desalkylgidazepam*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples (red chunk, red flake, pink chunk) sold as down in the qathet region (Powell River) tested positive for fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, and desalkylgidazepam, a benzo analog. Substances have resulted in overdose and prolonged sedation.
November 22, 2024 Prince George	Fentanyl/Down	Fentanyl, Bromazolam, Xylazine	Positive	Positive	A brown drug sold as fentanyl and as purple drug sold as down have both been linked to increases in overdoses. The purple down tested positive for benzo and xylazine.
November 26, 2024 Vancouver	Down	Fentanyl, Medetomidine, Bromazolam*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples sold as down in the DTES of Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and medetomidine (green pebble), or fentanyl, benzos, and medetomidine (green chunk, pink chunk). Medetomidine is a sedative more toxic than xylazine that may not be detected by FTIR spectrometer.
November 26, 2024 Vancouver	Oxycodone	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Fentanyl, Calcium Stearate, Xylazine	Positive	Negative	Light blue round counterfeit oxycodone tablets with imprint "M/30" sold in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl and xylazine and negative for oxycodone.
November 26, 2024 Vancouver	Cocaine	Fentanyl, Cocaine, Bromazolam	Positive	Positive	White powder sold as cocaine in Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl, cocaine, and bromazolam. Substance has caused overdose.

Public Health Notifications Cont.

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
November 27, 2024 Prince George	Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	Microcrystalline Cellulose, Uncertain Oil	Positive	Negative	A pressed, white, 8mg tablet sold as Dilaudid/Dilly tested positive for fentanyl. The pill looks very similar to a prescription Dilaudid or Hydromorphone.
November 29, 2024 Surrey	Mescaline	O-PCE	Negative	N/A	White powder sold as Mescaline in Surrey tested positive for O-PCE instead. Dosing and effects are significantly different for these two drugs.

*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:

