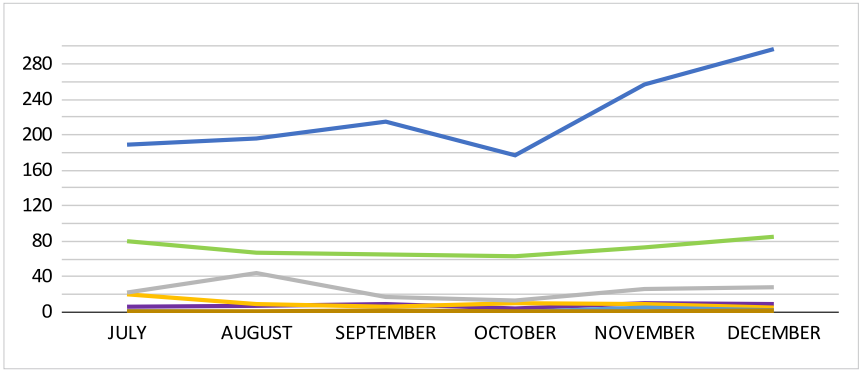
December 2023

Drug Checking in Fraser Health

Key Findings

- In December, 427 drug checks were performed across the Fraser Health region, the highest number of samples to-date.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and test strip increased from 65.4% to 70.7% in December (210 of 297 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were found in concentrations high enough to be detected by FTIR in 31.4% of unregulated opioid samples (92 of 293 samples), with bromazolam most commonly identified (74 samples), followed by desalkylgidazepam (10 samples).
- Fluorofentanyl was detected by FTIR in 19.1% of unregulated opioid samples (56 of 293 samples), whereas fentanyl was detected in 64.5% (189 samples).
- Xylazine was detected by FTIR in 2.7% of unregulated opioids (8 of 293 samples).
- Drug checking services in Fraser Health are expanding! Services are now available in Abbotsford, Burnaby, Chilliwack, Hope, Maple Ridge, Mission, New Westminster, and Surrey. For updated locations and hours, see the Fraser Health website.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



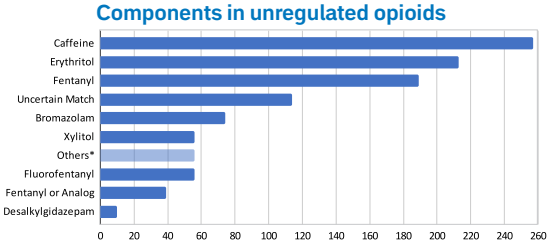
Number of samples by drug category in December

Opioid	297
Stimulant	85
Depressant	9
Psychedelic	5
Other	2
Polysubstance	1
Unknown	28

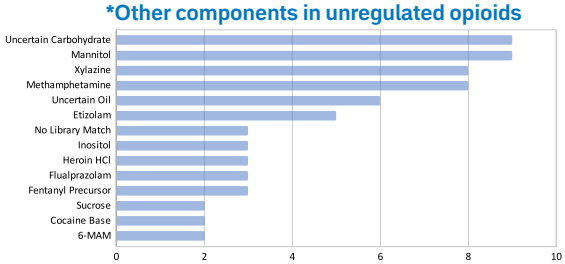
TOTAL: 427

Components found in drug samples in December

Components in unregulated opioids

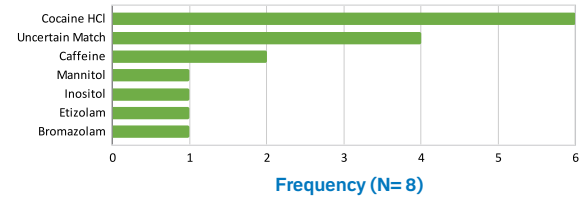


*Other components in unregulated opioids

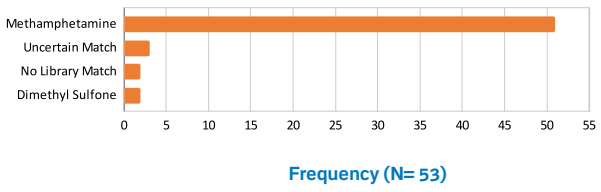


Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: Dimethyl Sulfone, MDMA, N-Boc Norfentanyl Base

Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



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Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

297 Opioid samples

9 FENTANYL NEGATIVE (3%)

288 FENTANYL POSITIVE (97%)

85 Stimulant samples

78 FENTANYL NEGATIVE (92%)

2 FENTANYL POSITIVE (2%) 5 FENTANYL NOT TESTED (6%)

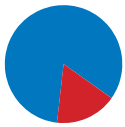
9 Depressant samples

6 FENTANYL NEGATIVE (67%)

1 FENTANYL POSITIVE (11%) 2 FENTANYL NOT TESTED (22%)

5 Psychedelic samples

4 FENTANYL NEGATIVE (80%)



1 FENTANYL NOT TESTED (20%)

2 Other samples

1 FENTANYL NEGATIVE (50%)

1 FENTANYL POSITIVE (50%)

1 Polysubstance samples

1 FENTANYL POSITIVE (100%)

28 Unknown samples

17 FENTANYL NEGATIVE (61%)

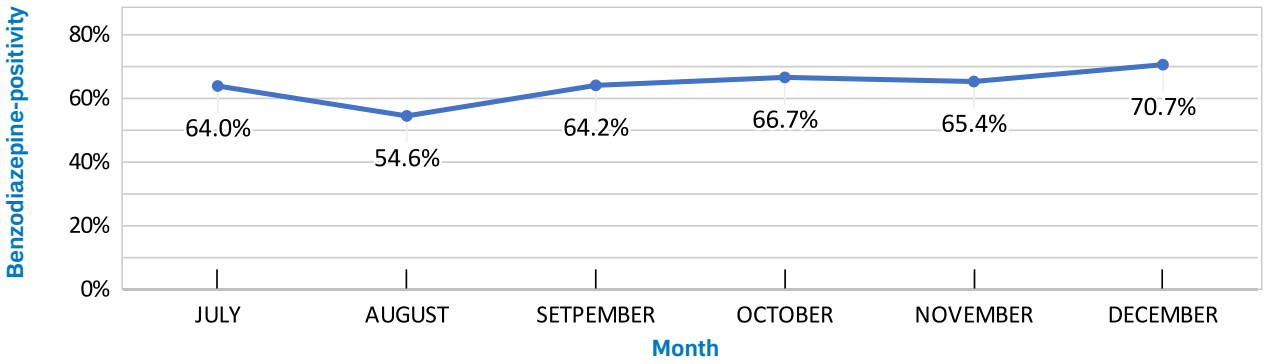
7 FENTANYL POSITIVE (25%) 4 FENTANYL NOT TESTED (14%)

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
No alerts for Fraser Health this month.						

For information about current substances in the Fraser Health region: overdose@fraserhealth.ca

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



During the month of December, **70.7%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner site in Fraser Health **(210 samples of 297 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.

Number of drugs checks at each site

Location	# of drug checks
Foxglove Housing (Coquitlam)	20
Foxglove Housing (Surrey)	165
Mountainside (Abbotsford)	75
Mountainside (Chilliwack)	84
Mountainside (Maple Ridge)	6

Location	# of drug checks
Mountainside (Mission)	16
Progressive Housing (Burnaby)	10
SafePoint (Surrey)	44
Total:	**427**

Less than 5 samples were tested at each of the following locations, which are included in the total: Mountainside (Hope), Purpose Society (New Westminster)

December 2023

Drug Checking in Fraser Health

of samples that matched client expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	290	7	0	297
Stimulant	79	6	0	85
Depressant	8	1	0	9
Psychedelic	5	0	0	5
Other	1	1	0	2
Polysubstance	1	0	0	1
Unknown	0	0	28	28
Total	384	15	28	427

Number of opioid samples that matched client expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Fentanyl	23	0	0	23
Heroin	2	0	0	2
Down	263	5	0	268
Pharmaceutical	0	2	0	2
Opium	2	0	0	2
Total	290	7	0	297

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

Depressant include: *benzodiazepines, etizolam, GHB, hypnotics*

Opioid include: *"down", heroin, fentanyl (unregulated opioids), and pharmaceutical opioids*

Polysubstance includes: *cross-category mixtures*

Psychedelic include: *MDMA and related, 2C-family, tryptamines, ketamine, LSD*

Stimulant include: *methamphetamine, "speed," cocaine and crack cocaine, cathinones*

Unknown includes: *Samples where the individual was unable to identify an expected substance. This includes found samples.*

Data represented here are collected from our partner sites across the province. Drug samples are tested using the Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometer in combination with fentanyl test strips and benzodiazapine test strips.

There is 5% fentanyl detection limit on the FTIR spectrometer (McCrae, 2019), and a drug check on any given sample consists of both the FTIR and BTNX fentanyl immunoassay test strip testing done in combination. When applicable, BTNX benzodiazepine immunoassay test strips are also used.

BCCSU gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following partners:

BRITISH COLUMBIA CENTRE ON SUBSTANCE USE
Providence HEALTH CARE How you want to be treated.
fraserhealth
Lookout Housing + Health Society
Purpose INSPIRING CHANGE
MOUNTAINSIDE Harm Reduction Society