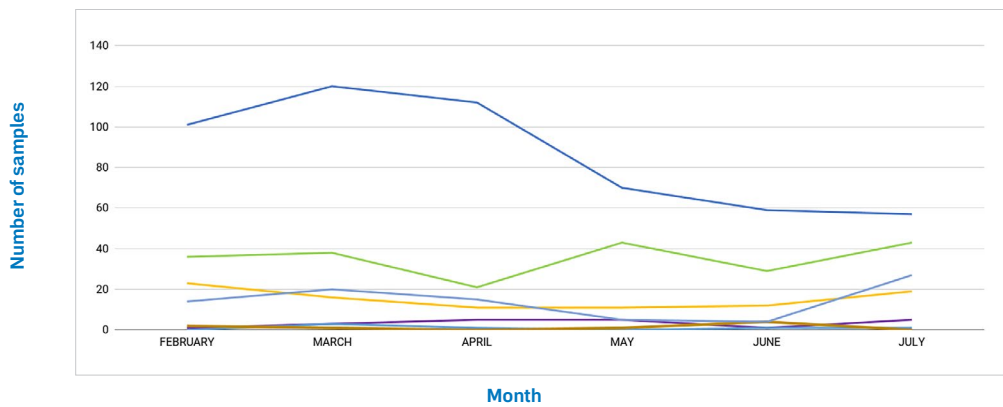


Key Findings

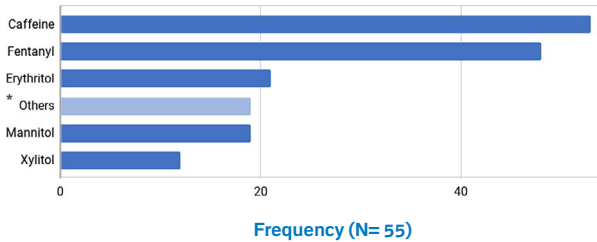
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the region (44%) has increased after a downward blip last month. Etizolam, the predominant benzodiazepine in expected opioids, may be missed by drug checking technologies. This means that the true rate may be higher than reported here.
- Three expected stimulant samples (methamphetamine, cocaine, and crack cocaine) were actually samples of down containing fentanyl. Many drugs look alike—drug checking can help you confirm what you think you have.
- Drug checking is available in many different communities in the Interior Health region. For updated times and locations, visit the Interior Health drug checking [website](#).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months

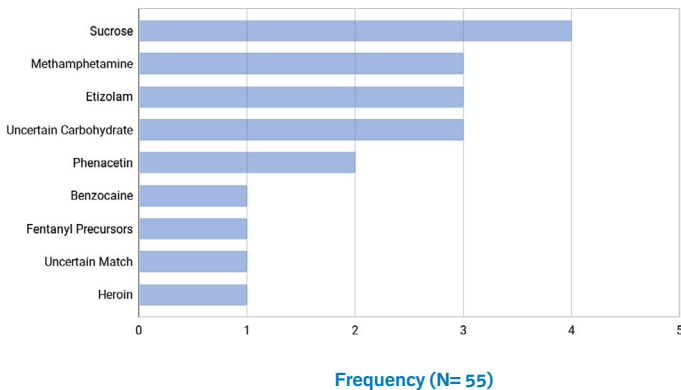


Components found in drug samples in July

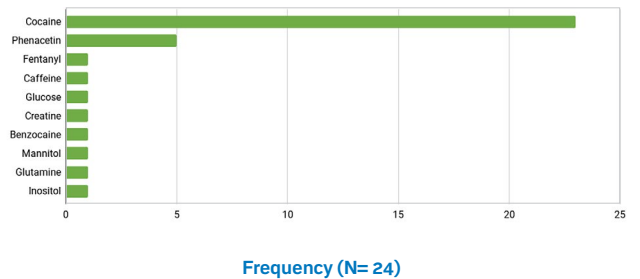
Components in opioids



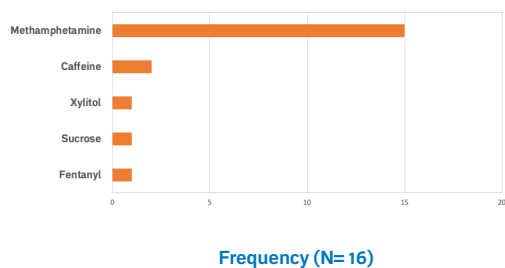
* Other components found in opioids



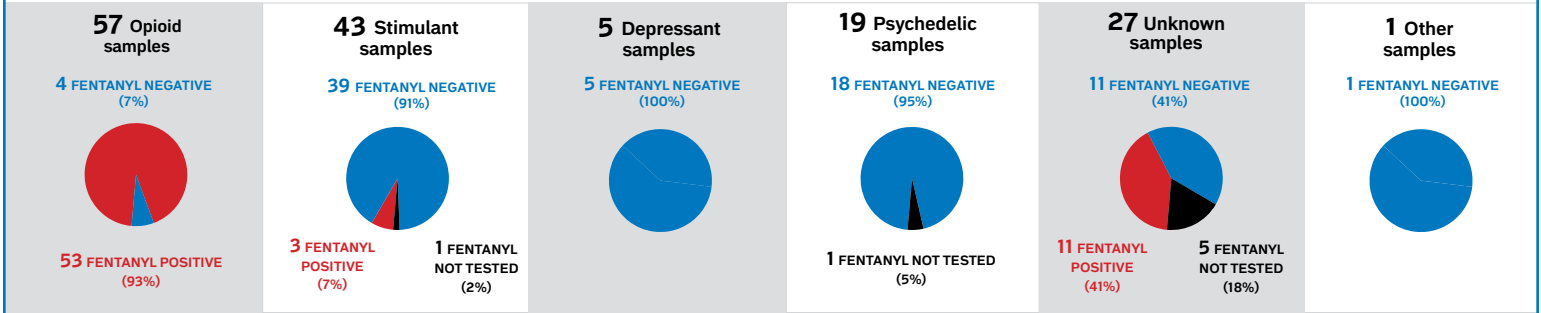
Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



Number of samples tested with **fentanyl present**

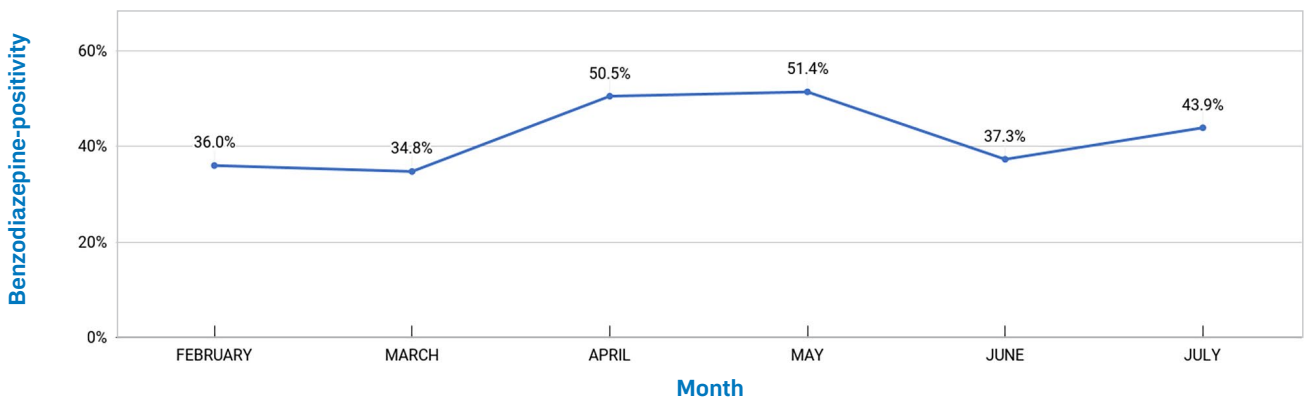


PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
July 30 2021 Living Positive Resource Centre, Kelowna	Cocaine	Cocaine, Phenacetin	Positive	N/A	Kelowna	There is a risk of opioid toxicity when stimulants are contaminated with fentanyl.
July 21 2021 ASK Wellness Kamloops	Methamphetamine	Caffeine, Xylitol, Methamphetamine, Fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Kamloops	The risk of overdose is increased when combining depressants (i.e., benzodiazepines with opioids) especially for people who don't regularly use opioids. Always be suspicious of methamphetamine if it's not a colourless, clear crystal—but still get it checked!

For information about public health alerts in the Interior Health region, please visit:
<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/AboutUs/Leadership/MHQ/Pages/PHEmergency.aspx>

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



During the month of July, **43.9%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in the Interior Health region (**25 samples of 57 checked**).

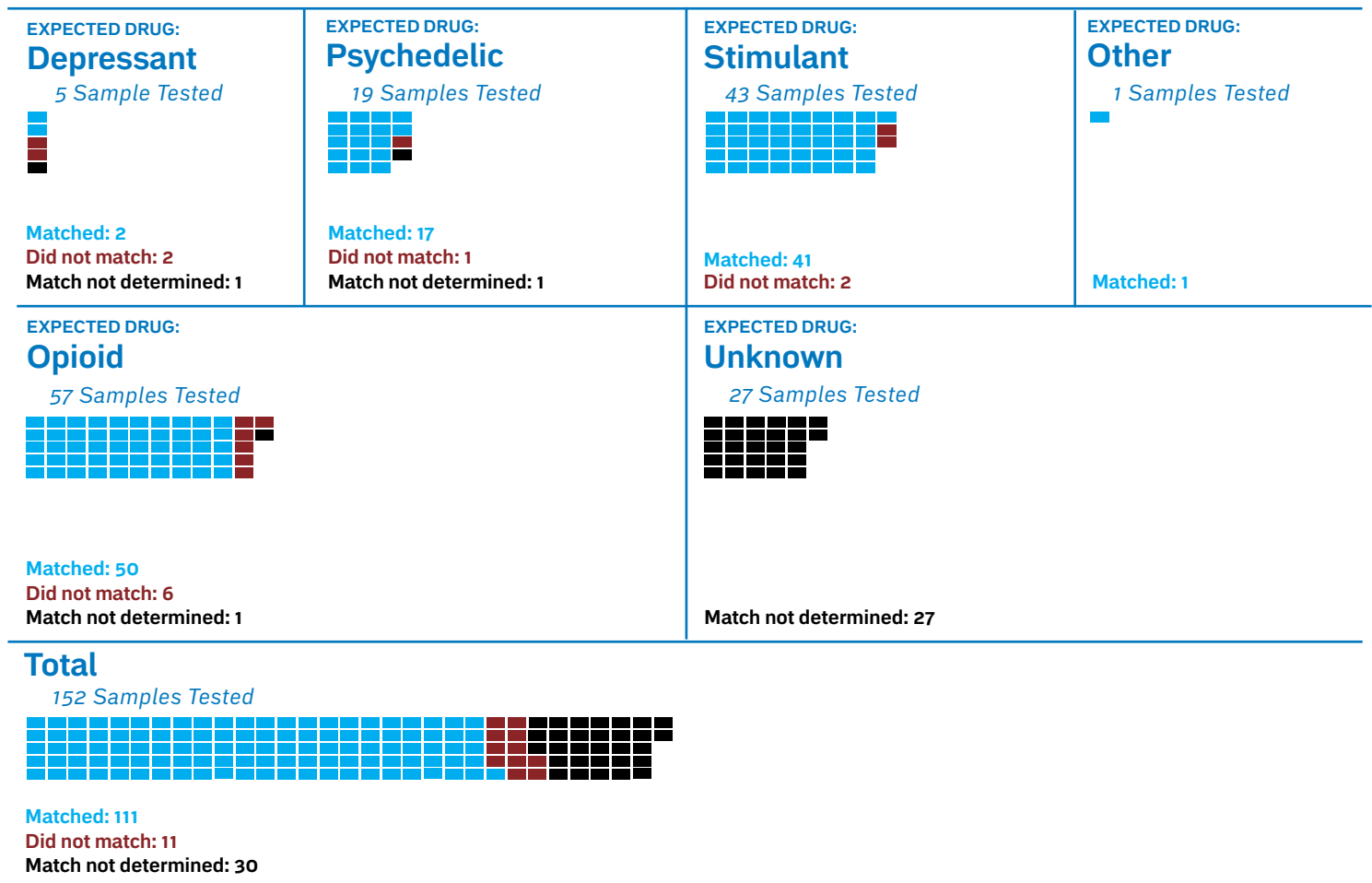
Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here are derived from both of these technologies and are presumptive until confirmed by a laboratory.

Number of drugs checks at each site

Organization	City/Town	# of Drugs Checked
ANKORS	Cranbrook	15
	Nelson	38
ASK Wellness	Kamloops	27
	Merritt	14
UBC Okanagan	Kelowna	18
	Penticton	16
	Vernon	24
Total		152

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking



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

Depressant may include:
benzodiazepines, etizolam,
GHB, hypnotics

Opioid may include:
"down," heroin, fentanyl,
pharmaceutical opioids

Polysubstance includes:
cross-category mixtures

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

Stimulant may 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.

Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Fentanyl

38 Samples Tested



Matched: 36

Did not match: 2

EXPECTED DRUG:

Heroin

3 Samples Tested



Matched: 1

Did not match: 2

EXPECTED DRUG:

Fentanyl and Heroin

1 Samples Tested



Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Down

13 Samples Tested



Matched: 13

EXPECTED DRUG:

Pharmaceutical

2 Samples Tested



Matched: 1

Match not determined: 1

Total

57 Samples Tested



Matched: 50

Did not match: 6

Match not determined: 1

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.

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 benzodiazepine 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: