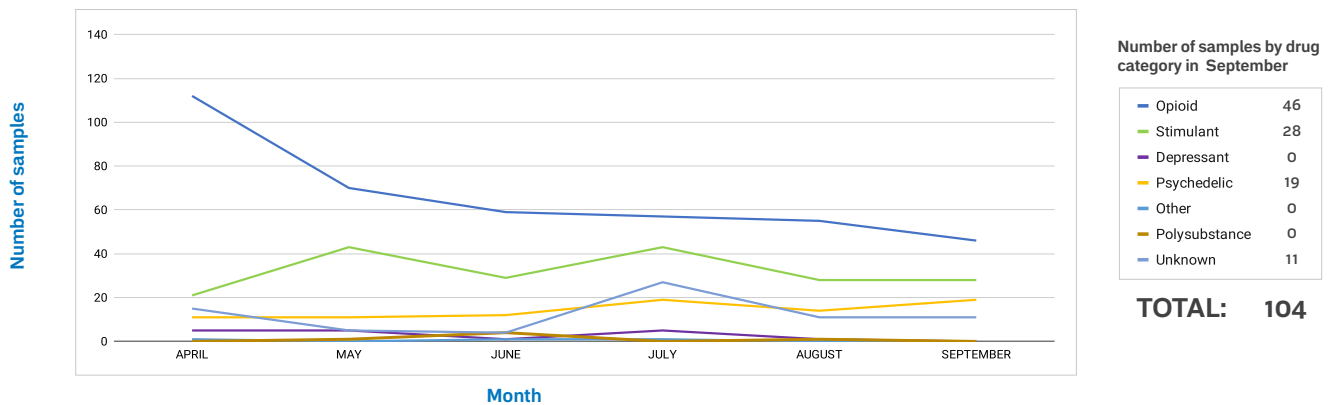


Key Findings

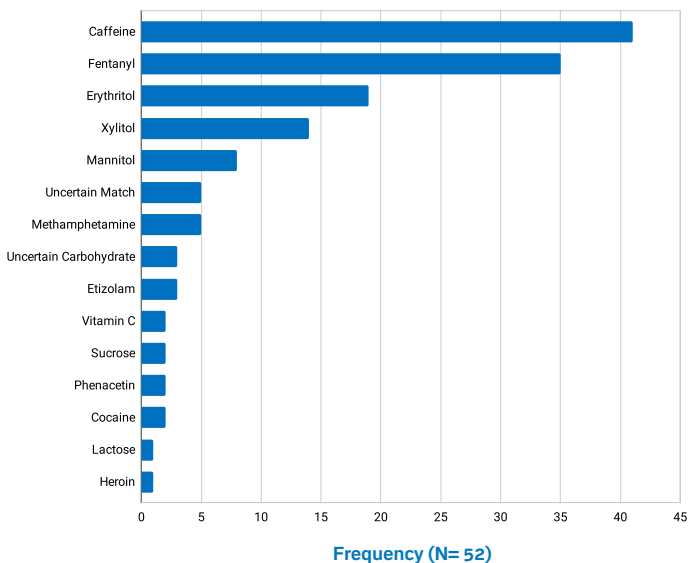
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the region (41%, 19 of 46 samples) increased from last month, but trends may be hard to infer due to the small number of samples over a large region. Etizolam, the predominant benzodiazepine in expected opioids, may be missed by drug checking technologies. This means that the true rate may be higher than reported here.
- Fentanyl was detected in 3 stimulant samples. While these results are concerning, two of the findings can be explained by cross-contamination after purchase. See the additional “Fentanyl-positive non-opioids” document for information about each of the samples.
- 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

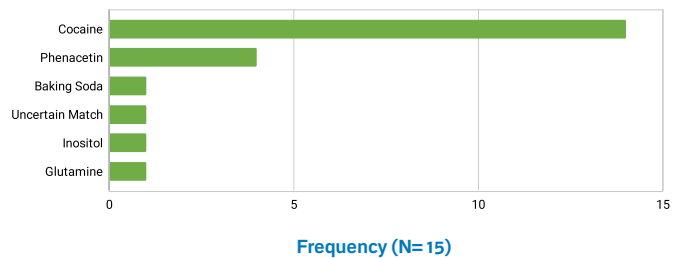


Components found in drug samples in September

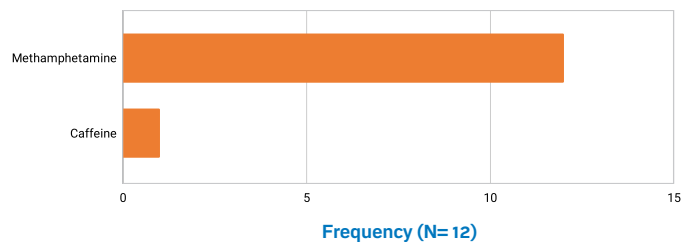
Components in opioids



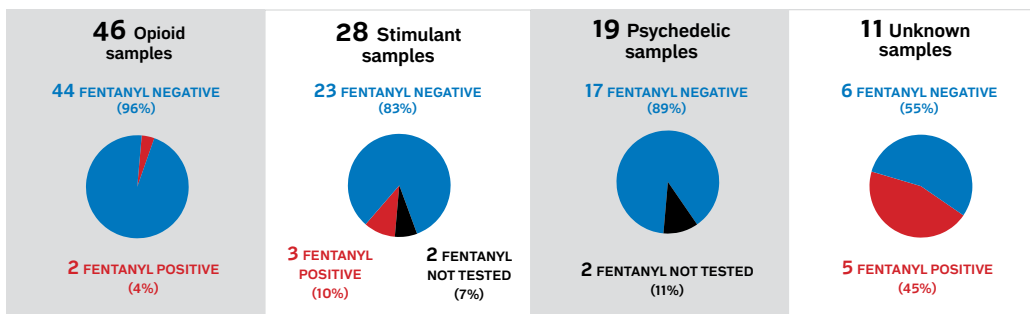
Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

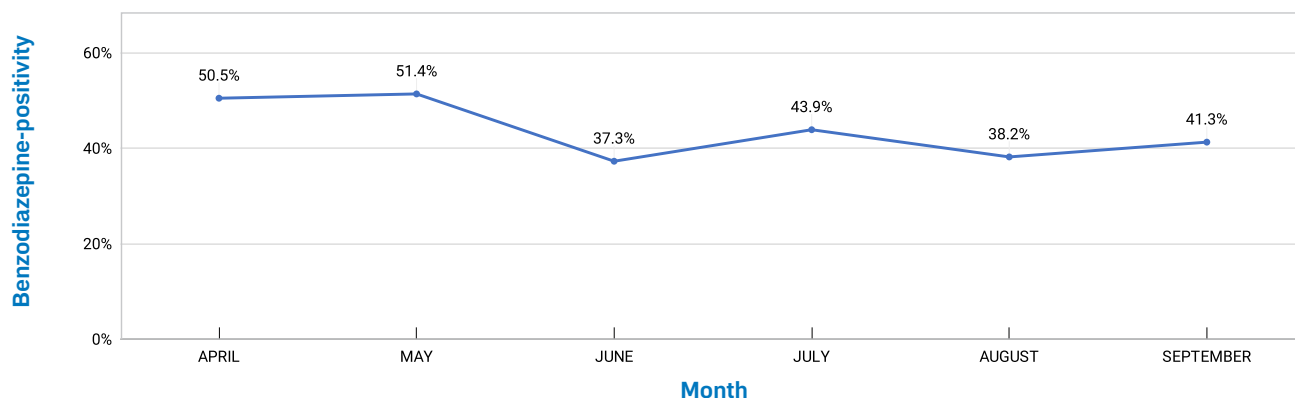


PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
September 23, 2021 Kamloops & Merritt	Down (unknown opioid)	Caffeine, Xylitol, Fentanyl, Possible synthetic cannabinoid	Positive	Negative	Merritt	Although this sample was not confirmed by laboratory testing, synthetic cannabinoids are known to cause hallucinations and disorientation if ingested accidentally.
September 13, 2021 Kamloops	Down (Unknown Opioid)	Cocaine base, Phenacetin	Positive	Positive	Kamloops	Combining depressants increases the risk of overdose, and stimulants don't decrease that risk. Phenacetin and cocaine base don't dissolve well in water which could lead to vein damage.

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 September, **41.3%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Interior Health (**19 samples of 46 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 drug checks at each site

Organization	City/Town	# of Drugs Checked
ANKORS	Cranbrook	10
	Nelson	20
	Trail	5
ASK Wellness	Kamloops	22
	Merritt	8
UBC Okanagan HaRT	Kelowna	12
	Penticton	7
	Vernon	20
Total		104

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Psychedelic

19 Samples Tested



Matched: 17
Did not match: 2

EXPECTED DRUG:

Stimulant

28 Samples Tested



Matched: 27
Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Opioid

46 Samples Tested



Matched: 40
Did not match: 6

EXPECTED DRUG:

Unknown

11 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 11

Total

104 Samples Tested



Matched: 84
Did not match: 9
Match not determined: 11

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

25 Samples Tested



Matched: 24

Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Heroin

5 Samples Tested



Matched: 1

Did not match: 4

EXPECTED DRUG:

Down

15 Samples Tested



Matched: 15

EXPECTED DRUG:

Fentanyl and Heroin

1 Samples Tested



Did not match: 1

Total

46 Samples Tested



Matched: 40

Did not match: 6

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: