Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Substance Drug Checking on Vancouver Island offers free and confidential drug checking services in Victoria, Port Alberni, Comox Valley, Campbell River, Duncan, Port Hardy, and at local events. This report presents data about the drug supply on Vancouver Island for October 2026.

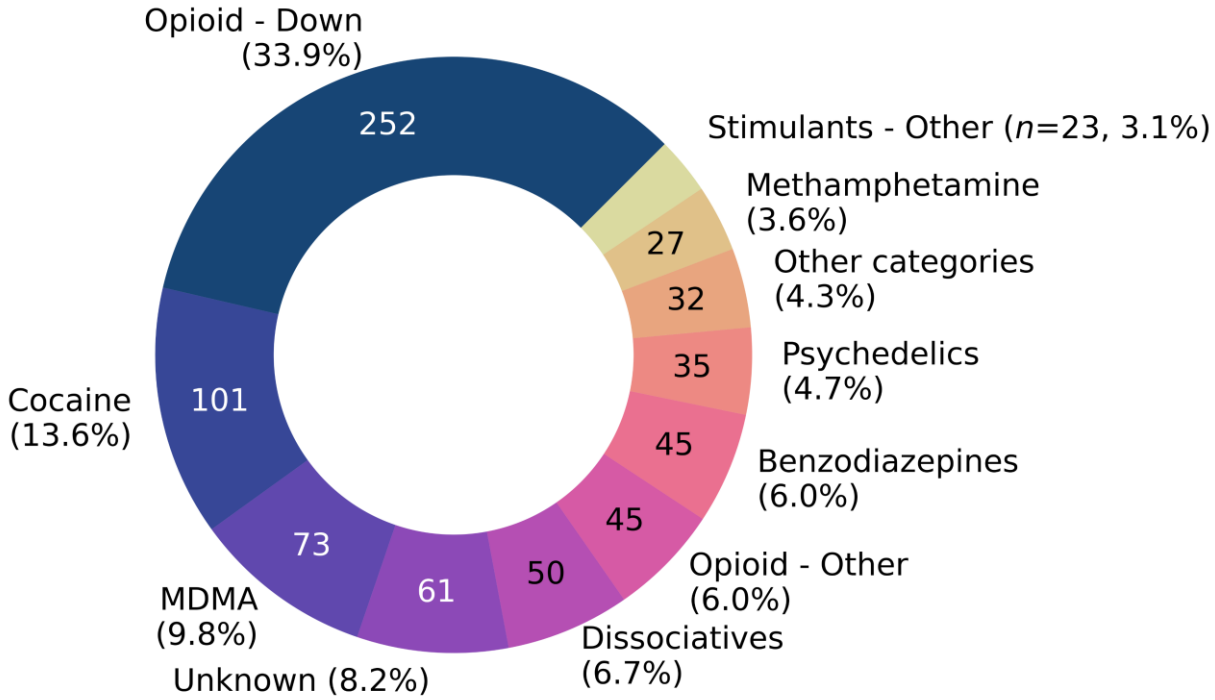
744
Samples Tested
October 2026

Highlighted Findings:

- 47.8% (356/744) of samples were as expected with cuts or adulterants detected
- The median fentanyl concentration found across all drug categories was 3.3%
- The median fluorofentanyl concentration found across all drug categories was 6.9%
- Benzodiazepines were found in 29.8% (75/252) of expected Opioid - Down samples
    - Ethylbromazolam was found in 28 Opioid - Down samples with a median concentration of 1.2% and maximum concentration of 9.2%
- Medetomidine was found in 55 expected Opioid - Down samples with a median concentration of 1.1% and a maximum concentration of 13.7%
- Nitazenes were not detected in any Opioid - Down samples during October

What were people bringing to be checked?

Service users bring us a wide variety of substances that can be grouped into different drug classes. This pie chart aggregates the samples we checked by their “expected” substance (i.e., the drug category reported by the service user). The number of samples checked in each class is included inside each slice and the relative proportion of all samples checked is given in parentheses. These data are separated by collection location/method on the following page.

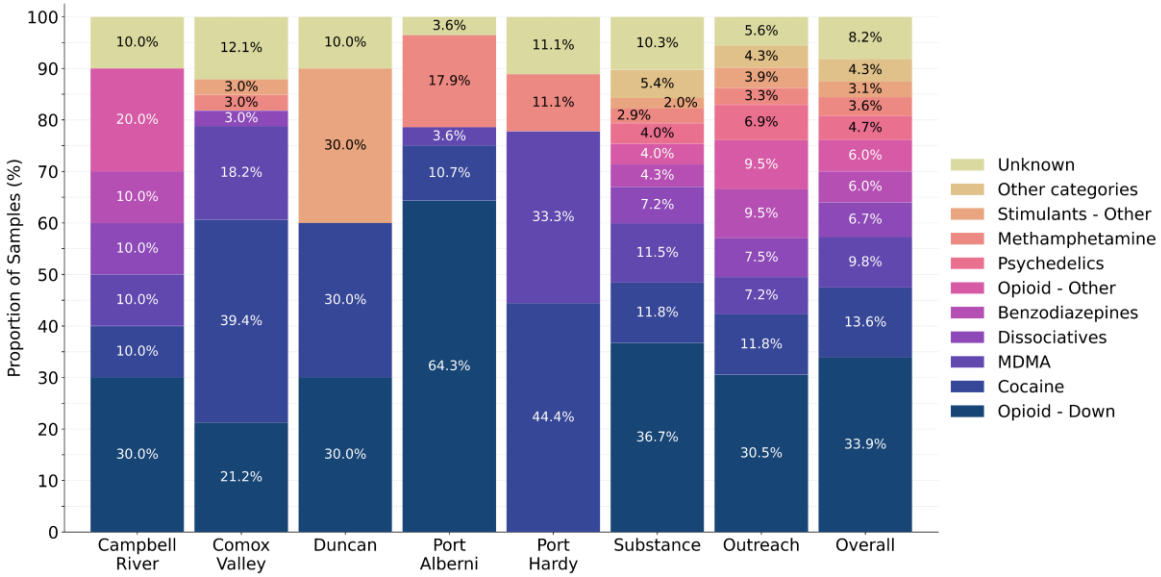


Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What were people bringing to be checked by service model?

The “expected substance” data presented on the previous page can be separated by sample collection location/method, where “Substance” samples are those brought directly to our storefront, “Campbell River”, “Comox Valley”, “Duncan”, “Port Alberni”, and “Port Hardy” samples are received through our distributed drug checking model, and “Outreach” samples are those collected at supported housing sites, at overdose prevention and supervised consumption sites, through drop-off envelopes, and at events/pop-ups. This October's “Outreach” samples include samples checked at Pachena Bay Music Festival. The relative proportions of samples checked by location and expected drug class are shown in the figure below; sample counts are listed in the table at the bottom of this page.



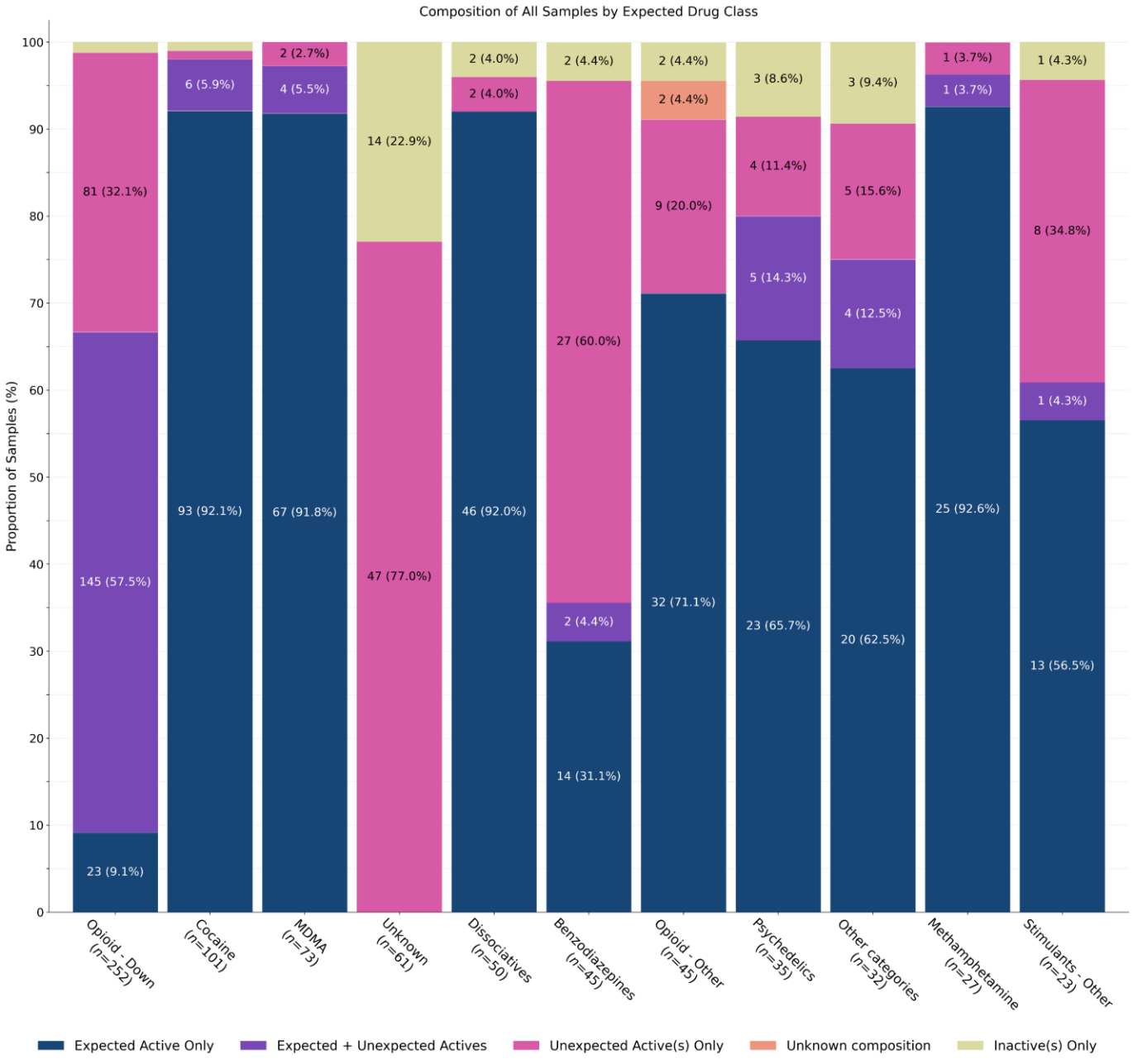
Expected Substance Class	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Port Hardy	Substance	Outreach	Overall
Opioid - Down	3	7	3	18	0	128	93	252
Cocaine	1	13	3	3	4	41	36	101
MDMA	1	6	0	1	3	40	22	73
Dissociatives	1	1	0	0	0	25	23	50
Benzodiazepines	1	0	0	0	0	15	29	45
Opioid - Other	2	0	0	0	0	14	29	45
Psychedelics	0	0	0	0	0	14	21	35
Methamphetamine	0	1	0	5	1	10	10	27
Stimulants - Other	0	1	3	0	0	7	12	23
Other categories	0	0	0	0	0	19	13	32
Unknown	1	4	1	1	1	36	17	61
Total	**10**	**33**	**10**	**28**	**9**	**349**	**305**	**744**

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find?

We checked each sample to determine what active compounds and cutting agents were present. While most samples contained the expected active drug, we also detected other notable compounds that may cause unexpected effects. The figure below illustrates the proportions and numbers of samples checked in each drug category, separated by their expected drug class and colour coded by their composition. **Dark Blue** groups samples that were "as expected" with no other notable compounds *detected*, **Purple** groups samples that contained the expected drug *and* other unexpected active(s), **Magenta** groups samples that only contained unexpected active(s) (the expected drug was not found), **Salmon** groups samples where we were unable to determine the composition, and **Lime** displays samples where no active compounds were detected.



Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Opioid - Down: What Did We Find?

In this section, we cover what we found in opioid - down samples at each collection location/model. The number of samples that contained the expected active and/or other notable components are listed. Samples where no detected actives have been excluded for brevity.

Opioid - Down	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	1				15	7
Fentanyl	1				15	7
Medetomidine					1	
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)			**1**	**9**	**78**	**57**
Fentanyl*			1	8	68	50
Heroin*				3	13	12
3-hydroxy Desalkylgidazepam					1	2
Acetylcodeine					5	5
Acetylmorphine (MAM, 6-MAM)				3	12	11
Benzodiazepine (unknown type)				3	8	5
Bromazolam				3	1	
Carfentanil				1		
Cocaine Base						2
Desalkylgidazepam			1	2	4	5
Ethylbromazolam			1		13	6
Ethylflualprazolam				1	2	3
Fentanyl analogue (unknown type)						1
Flualprazolam						1
Fluorofentanyl			1	5	56	42
Medetomidine			1	1	13	17
Methamphetamine					1	1
Morphine					2	2
Phenazolam					1	
Procaine					2	

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Opioid - Down: What Did We Find? (Continued)

Opioid - Down	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Unexpected Active(s) Only	**2**	**7**	**2**	**8**		**35**
3-hydroxy Desalkylgidazepam		1				
Acetylcodeine		1				1
Acetylmorphine (MAM, 6-MAM)		1				1
Benzodiazepine (unknown type)						1
Bromazolam		1		2		
Carfentanil						
Cocaine Base						1
Cocaine HCl						2
Cychlorphine						
Desalkylgidazepam		2		2		
Ethylbromazolam						3
Ethylflualprazolam						1
Fentanyl				2		
Fentanyl analogue (unknown type)						1
Fluorofentanyl	1	5	2	7		32
Heroin		1				1
Medetomidine		4		4		4
Methamphetamine				1		1
Xylazine		2				
ortho-Methyl fentanyl	1	2				

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

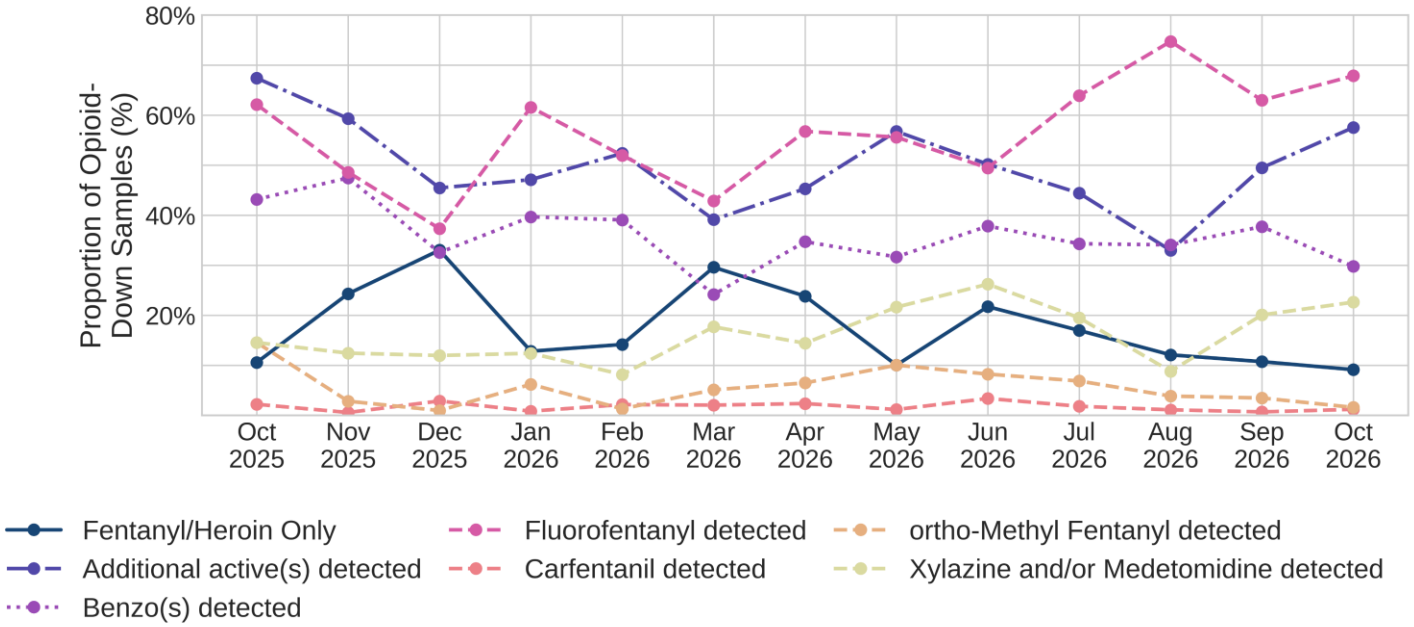
Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Opioid - Down: Supply Trends

In this section we cover the opioid - down supply as a whole and look at the prevalence of different opioids and adulterants within the supply.

In October, 57.5% (145/252) of all opioid-down samples checked contained an additional active to the expected fentanyl/heroin. These data are shown in the figure below alongside the prevalence of benzos, fluorofentanyl, ortho-methyl fentanyl, carfentanil, and tranq (xylazine and/or medetomidine) in the down



- 23.8% (60/252) of expected opioid-down samples contained fentanyl as the only active opioid
- 30.2% (94/252) of expected opioid-down samples contained fluorofentanyl as the only active opioid
- 31 samples contained heroin, 28 of which contained the related alkaloid acetylcodeine and/or acetylmorphine (MAM). In total, this represents 12.3% of all opioid - down samples.
    - 19/31 samples which contained heroin also contained fentanyl or a fentanyl analogue
- 3 expected opioid-down sample contained carfentanil
- 4 expected opioid - down samples contained ortho-methyl fentanyl
- 29.8% (75/252) of expected opioid-down samples contained a benzodiazepine
    - The most common benzodiazepine in opioid-down samples was ethylbromazolam (28), followed by benzodiazepine (unknown type) (17) and desalkylgidazepam (17). Other benzodiazepines were also detected and can be found in the “Opioid - Down: What Did We Find?” Section.
- 2 expected opioid-down samples contained xylazine
- Medetomidine was detected in 21.8% (52/252) of opioid-down samples
- Nitazenes were not detected opioid - down samples during October

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Opioid - Down: Quantification

In October, we quantified fentanyl for 143 of the expected opioid-down samples[1] containing fentanyl and found the median concentration to be 3.3%[2]. Though the median is a useful indicator, it doesn't capture the volatility of fentanyl concentrations present in the opioid supply, as half of fentanyl-positive down samples contained between 1.1% and 6.4% fentanyl, and any one sample might be the lowest strength (0.1%) or the strongest (greater than 50%*). Fluorofentanyl was quantified in 142amples with concentrations ranging from 0.1% to greater than 50%, with a median concentration of 7.0%. Heroin, was quantified in 27 samples at a median concentration of 1.0%, with concentrations ranging from 0.3% to a maximum of greater than 50%. Medetomidine, was quantified in 55 samples and had concentrations ranging from 0.3% to 13.7%, with a median of 1.1%. Ethylbromazolam, was quantified in 27 samples, with a median of 1.2%, and concentrations ranging from less than 0.1% to a maximum of 9.2%.

Compound	# Quant.	Median	Min	Max	IQR
Fentanyl	143	3.3%	0.1%	>50.0%*	1.1% - 6.4%
Fluorofentanyl	142	7.0%	0.1%	>50.0%*	2.8% - 15.1%
Medetomidine	55	1.1%	0.2%	13.7%	0.7% - 2.7%
Acetylmorphine	29	0.9%	0.2%	>50.0%*	0.4% - 4.0%
Ethylbromazolam	27	1.2%	<0.1%	9.2%	0.7% - 1.9%
Heroin	27	1.0%	0.3%	>50.0%*	0.6% - 1.7%
Desalkylgidazepam	17	2.8%	0.8%	10.5%	1.5% - 5.1%
Acetylcodeine	12	1.8%	0.1%	4.5%	1.0% - 2.2%
Ethylflualprazolam	8	1.2%	0.8%	3.9%	0.9% - 1.5%
Bromazolam	7	2.6%	0.4%	7.1%	1.0% - 3.9%
3-hydroxy Desalkylgidazepam	4	0.7%	0.2%	38.1%	0.3% - 10.3%
Morphine	4	0.7%	0.6%	1.1%	0.6% - 0.8%
ortho-Methyl fentanyl	3	11.9%	1.9%	18.0%	
Carfentanil	3	2.7%	0.1%	18.0%	
Methamphetamine	3	23.1%	10.2%	33.8%	
Xylazine	2		12.7%	12.9%	
Cychlorphine	2		0.5%	11.1%	
Procaine	2		35.3%	50.0%	

[1]Not all opioid down samples brought to our service can be quantified. This is primarily due to too limited sample collected for our instruments to report a reliable mass percentage. Nevertheless, qualitative detection is still possible.

[2]This number is specific to fentanyl quantified in opioid-down samples. The median concentration listed in the Key Findings at the beginning of this blog is inclusive of all samples checked, across all drug classes and unknown samples, that contained fentanyl.

**There is a maximum concentration limit that the PS-MS can quantify for each compound of interest. If a sample contains a higher percentage of a compound than the PS-MS's limits, then only the upper limit will be reported. Not all samples can be quantified.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Opioid - Down: Quantification by Service Model

Here we examine the regional variability in the unregulated market. The table below expands on the data presented on the previous page and focuses only on select actives within *expected opioid-down samples*, separated by collection site. Weight percentage is reported; "IQR" is the interquartile range: the range that contains half of the quantified samples.

Service Model	Compound	# Quant.	Median	Min	Max	IQR
Campbell River 3 total down samples 0% (0/3) benzo-positive	No down samples were quantified during the month of October.					
Comox Valley 7 total down samples 29% (2/7) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	1		0.4%		
	Desalkylgidazepam	2		5.9%	6.2%	
	Fluorofentanyl	3	9.9%	0.5%	50.0%	
	Medetomidine	4	1.3%	0.9%	13.7%	1.0% - 4.6%
	Xylazine	2		12.7%	12.9%	
	ortho-Methyl fentanyl	2		11.9%	18.0%	
Duncan 3 total down samples 33% (1/3) benzo-positive	Desalkylgidazepam	1		2.1%		
	Ethylbromazolam	1		2.8%		
	Fentanyl	1		3.4%		
	Fluorofentanyl	1		0.8%		
	Medetomidine	1		1.1%		
	Desalkylgidazepam	1		2.1%		
Port Alberni 18 total down samples 67% (12/18) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	5	2.9%	0.4%	7.1%	2.6% - 4.8%
	Carfentanil	1		2.7%		
	Desalkylgidazepam	4	3.1%	2.6%	4.6%	2.8% - 3.7%
	Fentanyl	10	4.7%	0.3%	9.6%	3.6% - 6.9%
	Fluorofentanyl	12	9.4%	1.7%	46.8%	3.7% - 24.4%
	Medetomidine	5	2.1%	0.8%	5.9%	1.0% - 2.7%
Port Hardy 0 total down samples	No down samples were checked during the month of October.					

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Opioid - Down: Quantification by Service Model (Continued)

Service Model	Compound	# Quant.	Median	Min	Max	IQR
Substance 128 total down samples 26% (33/128) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	1		1.5%		
	Desalkylgidazepam	4	1.1%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0% - 1.5%
	Ethylbromazolam	15	1.2%	0.1%	3.6%	0.7% - 1.8%
	Fentanyl	77	1.8%	0.1%	50.0%	1.0% - 6.1%
	Fluorofentanyl	69	6.2%	0.1%	50.0%	2.5% - 10.9%
	Medetomidine	18	1.0%	0.3%	9.7%	0.7% - 1.3%
Outreach 93 total down samples 29% (27/93) benzo-positive	Carfentanil	2		0.1%	18.0%	
	Desalkylgidazepam	6	4.1%	0.8%	10.5%	1.9% - 6.6%
	Ethylbromazolam	11	1.1%	0.0%	9.2%	0.8% - 1.5%
	Fentanyl	55	3.6%	0.1%	41.8%	1.7% - 7.9%
	Fluorofentanyl	57	9.2%	0.2%	50.0%	3.8% - 24.9%
	Medetomidine	27	1.2%	0.2%	10.5%	0.5% - 3.3%
	ortho-Methyl fentanyl	1		1.9%		

**There is a maximum concentration limit that the PS-MS can quantify for each compound of interest. If a sample contains a higher percentage of a compound than the PS-MS's limits, then only the upper limit will be reported. Not all samples can be quantified.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find?

In this section, we cover what we found in samples from the remaining expected drug classes at each collection location/model. The number of samples that contained the expected active and/or other notable components are listed. Samples where no detected actives have been excluded for brevity.

MDMA	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Port Alberni	Port Hardy	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	**1**	**6**	**1**	**2**	**36**	**21**
MDA					1	6
MDMA	1	6	1	2	35	18
Methamphetamine						1
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)				**1**	**2**	**1**
MDMA* + Cocaine Base				1		
MDMA* + Cocaine HCl					1	
MDMA* + MDA, Methamphetamine					1	
MDMA* + MDA						1
Unexpected Active(s) Only					**2**	
Ketamine					1	
MDA					1	

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find? (Continued)

Cocaine	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Port Hardy	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	**1**	**12**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**39**	**33**
Cocaine Base		9	3	1	1	9	4
Cocaine HCl	1	3			3	30	29
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)		**1**				**2**	**3**
Cocaine Base* + Fentanyl or analogue							1
Cocaine Base* + Fluorofentanyl						1	
Cocaine HCl* + Phenacetin		1				1	2
Cocaine Base* + Phenacetin							
Unexpected Active(s) Only				**1**			
Methamphetamine				1			

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find? (Continued)

Dissociatives	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	**1**	**1**	**24**	**20**
Ketamine	1	1	24	19
MXPCP				1
Unexpected Active(s) Only				**2**
3-Me-PCP				1
MDMA				1

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find? (Continued)

Benzodiazepines	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	**3**	**11**
Alprazolam (Xanax)		3
Clonazepam (Klonopin)		1
Diazepam (Valium)	3	2
Ethylflualprazolam		5
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)	**2**	
Bromazolam* + Ethylbromazolam, Fluorofentanyl, Unknown	1	
Bromazolam* + Fluorofentanyl	1	
Unexpected Active(s) Only	**9**	**18**
Benzodiazepine (unknown type)		4
Bromazolam		1
Codeine (T3's / T4's)		1
Desalkylgidazepam		7
Diphenidine		1
Ethylbromazolam	3	1
Ethylflualprazolam	3	1
Flubromazolam		1
Fluorofentanyl	1	
MDMA		1
Meclonazepam	1	
Oxycodone (Oxycontin)		1
Phenazolam	1	

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find? (Continued)

Opioid – Other	Campbell River	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	**2**	**7**	**23**
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)		2	
Deschloro SR-17018			1
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)		2	12
Methadone		2	
Morphine	1		
Oxycodone (Oxycontin)	1	2	9
SR-17018			1
Unexpected Active(s) Only		**5**	**4**
Cychlorphine		1	1
Deschloro SR-17018			1
Fentanyl		2	
Fluorofentanyl			1
Nitazene (unknown type)			1
ortho-Methyl fentanyl		2	
Unknown Composition		**2**	
Unknown		2	

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find? (Continued)

Methamphetamine	Comox Valley	Port Alberni	Port Hardy	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	**1**	**5**		**9**	**10**
Methamphetamine	1	5		9	10
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)				**1**	
Methamphetamine* + Cocaine Base				1	
Unexpected Active(s) Only			**1**		
4-MMC (Mephedrone)			1		

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find? (Continued)

Psychedelics	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	**11**	**12**
2C-B	6	2
4-HO-MET (Metocin, Colour)	1	
5-MeO-DMT		1
5-MeO-MiPT (Moxy)		1
Cocaine HCl		1
DMT (Dimethyltryptamine)	1	
Ketamine	2	2
LSD (acid)	1	6
MDMA	1	2
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)	**1**	**4**
2C-B* + Acetaminophen (Tylenol)	1	
2C-C* + Unknown		1
5-MeO-DMT* + Tryptamine (unknown type)		3
Unexpected Active(s) Only	**2**	**2**
1cP-LSD	1	
4-MMC (Mephedrone)	1	1
Tryptamine (unknown type)		1

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find? (Continued)

Other categories	Comox Valley	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	**1**	**15**	**17**
1,4-Butanediol		1	
4-MMC (Mephedrone)	1	4	5
Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine)		1	
GHB		2	
Lisdexamfetamine dimesylate (Vyvanse)			1
MDMA			1
Mebendazole		1	
Modafinil			1
Nandrolone		1	
Oxandrolone			2
Praziquantel		1	
Sildenafil (Viagra)			2
THC		1	
Tadalafil (Cialis)		2	5
Triclabendazole		1	
Tryptamine			1

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find? (Continued)

Other categories (Continued)	Duncan	Substance	Outreach
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)		**3**	**2**
3-MMC (Metaphedrone)			1
Acetaminophen (Tylenol)		1	
Cocaine Base		2	
Ketamine		2	
Nandrolone			1
Sildenafil (Viagra)		1	
Trenbolone enanthate			1
Unknown			1
Unexpected Active(s) Only	**3**	**6**	**4**
4-MMC (Mephedrone)	1		
Acetylcodeine	1		
Acetylmorphine	1		
Clobenzorex			1
Heroin	1		
Ketamine		1	
MDMA		1	
Methamphetamine	1	1	2
Oxymetholone			1
Trenbolone enanthate		4	

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

What did we find? (Continued)

Unknown	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Port Hardy	Substance	Outreach
Unexpected Active(s) Only	**1**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**24**	**16**
2C-B						1	
3-MMC (Metaphedrone)	1						
3-hydroxy Desalkylgidazepam				1			
4-MMC (Mephedrone)							4
Bromazolam			1			1	
Cocaine HCl						1	
Desalkylgidazepam						1	
Dicyclomine							1
Ethylbromazolam					1		
Fentanyl				1	1	8	3
Fentanyl analogue (unknown type)						1	
Fentanyl or analogue						2	1
Fluorofentanyl			1		1	2	
Ketamine						3	1
MDA						1	
MDMA		2				5	
Medetomidine							1
Methamphetamine		1				3	2
N-Pyrrolidino Ethylene Isotonitazene						1	
Oxycodone (Oxycontin)							4
Unknown						1	

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component. "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" and "Fentanyl or analogue" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.*

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Opioid-Positivity in Non-opioid-down Samples

In October, we checked 431 samples that were not expected to contain fentanyl or other "unexpected" opioids[1]. Since the opioid-down supply is no longer "just heroin" or "just fentanyl" and is instead a complex, potent, and ever-changing polysubstance market containing other synthetic opioids like fluorofentanyl or nitazenes, here we will examine the prevalence of *any* unexpected opioid, not just fentanyl, detected in non-opioid-down samples.

Expected Substance Class	Total Samples	Total Opioid Positive (% of total expected)	Samples Containing Expected Active (% of Total Samples in Class)	Contains Expected Active & Opioid Positive (% of Confirmed Expected in Class)
Cocaine	101	2 (2.0%)	99 (98.0%)	2 (2.0%)
MDMA	73	0 (0.0%)	71 (97.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Dissociatives	50	0 (0.0%)	46 (92.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Benzodiazepines	45	3 (6.7%)	16 (35.6%)	2 (12.5%)
Opioid - Other	45	6 (13.3%)	32 (71.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Psychedelics	35	0 (0.0%)	28 (80.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Other categories	32	0 (0.0%)	24 (75.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Methamphetamine	27	0 (0.0%)	26 (96.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Stimulants - Other	23	1 (4.3%)	14 (60.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Total	**431**	**12 (2.8%)**	**356 (82.6%)**	**4 (1.1%)**

Examining the above table, we find that 12 samples tested positive for unexpected opioids in October, representing 2.8% of all non-opioid-down samples checked. To see which samples contained unexpected opioids, please see the tables in the respective subsections of the "What Did We Find?" Section.

In October, no unexpected opioids were detected in samples expected to be MDMA, dissociatives, psychedelics, methamphetamine, or other.

[1]Specifically, we are excluding samples that were expected to be "opioid-down" or samples that had an "unknown/missing" expected composition. In the case of "opioid-other" samples, e.g. hydromorphone tablets and oxycodone pills, "unexpected opioids" are defined as any opioid that is not the expected opioid.

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Overall Quantification

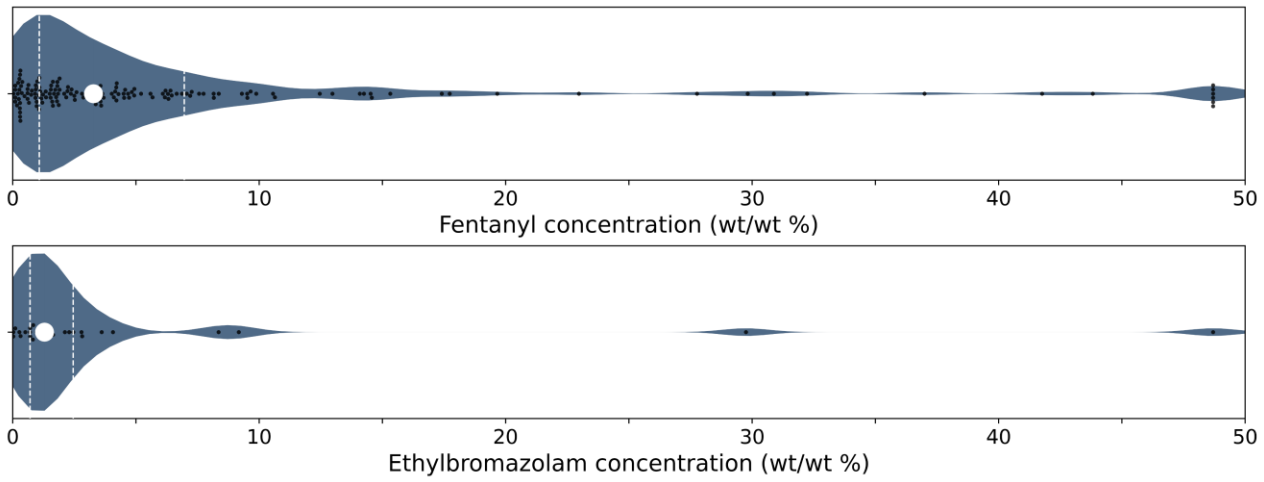
Using paper spray mass spectrometry (PS-MS) data, we were able to quantify low concentration compounds. These aggregate values are *inclusive to all expected drug categories* in which the active drugs are found. Weight percentage is reported below. "IQR" is the interquartile range: the concentration range that contains half of the quantified samples.

Compound	# Quant.	Median	Min	Max	IQR
Fentanyl	155	3.3%	<0.1%	>50.0%*	1.1% - 7.0%
Fluorofentanyl	150	6.9%	0.1%	>50.0%*	2.5% - 13.9%
Medetomidine	56	1.1%	0.2%	13.7%	0.7% - 2.7%
Ethylbromazolam	33	1.3%	<0.1%	48.7%	0.7% - 2.5%
Acetylmorphine	30	1.0%	0.2%	>50.0%*	0.4% - 4.0%
Heroin	28	1.1%	0.3%	>50.0%*	0.6% - 2.4%
Desalkylgidazepam	24	2.4%	0.2%	48.7%	0.9% - 5.3%
Ethylflualprazolam	14	0.8%	<0.1%	3.9%	0.4% - 1.3%
Acetylcodeine	13	1.6%	0.1%	4.5%	1.3% - 2.2%
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)	12	6.5%	2.1%	10.0%	4.2% - 8.1%

**There is a maximum concentration limit that the PS-MS can quantify for each compound of interest. If a sample contains a higher percentage of a compound than the PS-MS's limits, then only the upper limit will be reported. Not all samples can be quantified.*

Distribution of Fentanyl and Ethylbromazolam Concentrations

The concentrations of fentanyl and ethylbromazolam for every sample quantified across *all expected drug categories and service models* are illustrated below to highlight the variability in the unregulated drug market. **Black Dots** are individual samples, the large **white dot** marks the median concentration, the **dashed white lines** bound half of the quantified samples (IQR), and the **width** of the coloured region is proportional to the number of samples in a concentration range.



Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for October 2026

Additional Services

At Substance we provide access to other services in addition to drug checking. These include but are not limited to access to harm reduction supplies (bubble pipes, naloxone, test strip kits, etc.), general support, referrals to substance use programs and to other agencies.

Substance Drug Checking is based out of the University of Victoria and operates community-wide drug checking services within Campbell River, the Comox Valley, Duncan, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, and Victoria, BC. We are continuing to offer drug checking services in response to the declared public health emergency and exploring new ways to better reach those who may benefit from this service. We have partnered with Dr. Chris Gill and the team at Vancouver Island University to improve detection and reporting using their methods for the paper spray - mass spectrometer.

Our project works on Indigenous land. We provide drug checking, harm reduction education and support across many territories on what is colonially known as 'Vancouver Island.' We also act as a resource for these services across the province colonially known as 'British Columbia.' We honour and offer respect to many nations for their stewardship, care and leadership on these lands.

Our project originated on the territories of the lək^{w}əŋən speaking peoples, including the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) Nations, and the W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich) Nations on whose land the University of Victoria is located. Some of the territories we are honoured to work across specifically include: Halalt, Lyackson, Meluxulh (Malahat), Puneluxutth', Quw'utsun, Stz-uminus, and Ts'uubaa-asatx; Hupačasath and Tseshaht; K'ómoks; and Laich-kwil-tach.

We acknowledge the inextricable links between research, colonization and racism against Indigenous peoples, which continue to this date. Ending the violence faced by people who use drugs cannot be achieved without actively working on decolonization.

For more information please visit: substance.uvic.ca

We gratefully acknowledge our partners on this project

Agilent Technologies
AVI Health and Community Services
BC Ministry of Health
BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
BC SUPPORT Unit Vancouver Island Centre
Canadian Institute for Health Research
Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research
Digital Research Alliance of Canada
Island Health Authority
NSERC Canada
SOLID Outreach
University of Victoria
Vancouver Island University
Victoria Hospitals Foundation
Vancouver Foundation
Westgrid