

## Results from samples checked by Toronto's drug checking service

September 11 – 24, 2021

### Key findings

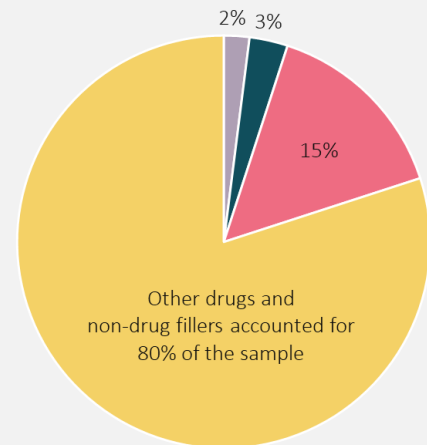
- 81 samples were checked: 75% were substances<sup>1</sup> and 25% were used paraphernalia<sup>2</sup>
- 64% of the samples checked were expected<sup>3</sup> to be fentanyl or cocaine
- 21% of the expected<sup>3</sup> fentanyl samples checked were known to be associated with an overdose: most contained fentanyl and caffeine, half contained one or more benzodiazepine-related drugs – all samples were reported as either blue, purple, or green
- 61% of the expected<sup>3</sup> fentanyl samples checked contained at least one benzodiazepine-related drug
- 24% of the expected<sup>3</sup> fentanyl samples checked contained at least one nitazene opioid

### Expected fentanyl substances

- 86% (19) of expected<sup>3</sup> fentanyl substances checked<sup>4</sup> **contained fentanyl and other drugs**, including:
  - 95% (18) contained caffeine
  - 53% (10) contained a benzodiazepine-related drug (!):
    - 47% (9) contained etizolam (!)
    - 21% (4) contained flualprazolam (!)
    - 5% (1) contained flubromazolam (!)
  - 47% (9) contained a nitazene opioid (!):
    - 16% (3) contained etonitazepine (!)
    - 16% (3) contained isotonitazene/protonitazene<sup>6</sup> (!)
    - 16% (3) contained metonitazene (!)
    - 5% (1) contained etodesnitazene (!)
  - 26% (5) contained despropionyl fentanyl (4-ANPP) (!)

### In an average fentanyl substance:

- Fentanyl accounted for 2% of the sample (n=13)
- Etizolam accounted for 3% of the sample (n=5)
- Caffeine accounted for 15% of the sample (n=16)



Toronto's drug checking service now reports the amount of fentanyl, carfentanil, etizolam, caffeine, and cocaine found in expected opioid powder substances.<sup>5</sup>

Not sure what some of these drugs are? View our drug dictionary:

[www.drugchecking.cdpe.org/drug-dictionary](http://www.drugchecking.cdpe.org/drug-dictionary)

- 11% (2) contained phenacetin (!)
- 5% (1) contained acetyl fentanyl (!)
- 5% (1) contained valeryl fentanyl (!)
- 5% (1) contained xylazine (!)

## Unexpected noteworthy drugs found in other expected substances

- 15% (6) of the remaining substances checked,<sup>4</sup> meaning substances that weren't expected<sup>3</sup> to be fentanyl, **contained an unexpected noteworthy drug**, including:
  - 7% (1) of **expected cocaine** substances contained flualprazolam (benzodiazepine-related) (!) – note that no cocaine was found in this substance
  - 7% (1) of **expected cocaine** substances contained levamisole (!)
  - 7% (1) of **expected cocaine** substances contained phenacetin (!)
  - 20% (1) of **expected MDMA** substances contained isotonitazene/protonitazene<sup>6</sup> (nitazene opioids) (!) – note that no MDMA was found in this substance
  - 100% (1) of **expected crack cocaine** substances contained phenacetin (!)
  - 100% (1) of **expected oxycodone** substances contained furanyl fentanyl (!) – note that no oxycodone was found in this substance

## Notes

**1 | Substances:** Two types of samples are accepted by Toronto's drug checking service: substances and used paraphernalia. Substances could be a small amount of powder, a crushed bit of a pill, blotter, or a small amount of liquid.

**2 | Used paraphernalia:** Two types of samples are accepted by Toronto's drug checking service: substances and used paraphernalia. Used paraphernalia could be a used cooker or filter, or leftover liquid from a syringe.

**3 | Expected (drug):** When a sample is submitted to be checked, the drug that sample is expected to contain is recorded. We call it the "expected drug". Knowing the expected drug helps us tailor our harm reduction advice. It also helps us understand contamination to drugs rather than combinations of drugs (e.g., fentanyl was found in a cocaine sample rather than fentanyl and cocaine were found together).

**4 | Reason for reporting only substance samples:** While Toronto's drug checking service checks both substances and used paraphernalia, we're sharing findings from substances only. Paraphernalia, like cookers, are often re-used. The mass spectrometry technologies used for this drug checking service are so sensitive that very trace amounts of drugs may be found. This means that when paraphernalia is re-

used, drugs from past use may present in the results for the sample that is being checked. This can interfere with up-to-date drug supply monitoring, so we've excluded used paraphernalia from this report.

**5 | Average amount of drugs found:** Toronto's drug checking service can now report the amount of fentanyl, cocaine, carfentanil, etizolam, and caffeine found as a proportion of the total sample submitted for expected opioid, cocaine, crack cocaine and some other powder substance samples. Every other week, we will publicly report the average (median) amount of fentanyl, cocaine, carfentanil, etizolam, and caffeine found in expected fentanyl substances. Additional quantity-based information will soon be available on our website.

**6 | isotonitazene/protonitazene:** Because isotonitazene and protonitazene have a very similar chemical structure, it is not currently possible for Toronto's drug checking service to differentiate between the two. They are therefore reported together when one is found.

**(!) | Unexpected noteworthy drug:** "Noteworthy drugs" are drugs that (i) are linked to overdose or other adverse effects, (ii) are highly potent or related to highly potent drugs, or (iii) may not be desired by some clients. Noteworthy drugs are flagged when they are unexpectedly found in checked samples.

---

*Toronto's drug checking service* offers people who use drugs timely and detailed information on the contents of their drugs using the most sophisticated lab-based technologies. Interact with our drug checking data [online](#) – it's updated every other week. [Sign up](#) to receive reports, alerts, and other information on Toronto's unregulated drug supply.

(e) [drugchecking@cdpe.org](mailto:drugchecking@cdpe.org) | (t) [@drugpolicyctr](https://twitter.com/drugpolicyctr) | (f) [facebook.com/centreondrugpolicyevaluation](https://facebook.com/centreondrugpolicyevaluation)

