

# ANKORS

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## ANKORS Weekly Drug Checking Report

Week of February 7<sup>th</sup>

Hi everyone,

I hope you are all doing well and taking care.

This week, ANKORS was busy with drug checking again. Over the course of the week, I tested 25 samples: seven in Nelson, five in Trail, and 13 in Grand Forks. 11 of these samples were sold as down (fentanyl), seven were sold as meth, four were sold as ketamine, two were sold as cocaine, and one was sold as MDMA.

Of note, two of the ketamine samples contained a **mixture of ketamine and a precursor that is used in the synthesis of fentanyl** (the same inactive compound that was previously detected in samples sold as ketamine). This indicates that this trend is not over, and that people who are using ketamine should continue to get their drugs tested before using. Down samples continue to vary in terms of the cuts and buffs that are used, the amount of fentanyl that is present, and whether or not benzodiazepines are present. Again, **all but one of the down samples tested positive for benzodiazepines**. The predominant benzodiazepines (or benzodiazepine analogues) circulating in the supply at this time are etizolam and flualprazolam. Fentanyl concentration varied between **<5%-20%**, with the majority of samples being between 5-10% fentanyl.

**PLEASE NOTE: Interior Health has issued a region-wide drug alert!** This alert specifies that multiple down samples containing **50% fentanyl** and/or **25% etizolam** (a benzo-analogue) have been tested in communities across the region. Please be aware that none of these samples have been detected in the Kootenay-Boundary region yet; however, it is important to be on high alert as there is a good chance that they may make their way to this part of the province in the near future. I have attached the alert separately for more information.

**Disclaimer:** *While drug checking can help reduce the risk of using drugs by allowing users to make better informed decisions, please recognize that the use of FTIR spectrometry and test strips has limitations. Notably, the FTIR cannot detect substances that are present in amounts below its detection limit (5%) or substances that are absent from the reference databases. Test strips may fail to detect certain drug analogues and the binary results cannot be translated to parts of the sample that were not tested with the strips. No drug use is completely safe, and checking your drugs does not eliminate all risk.*

Next week, I will offer drug checking in Nelson on Monday and Thursday. I will return to Grand Forks on Tuesday and will be in Trail with the OPS on Wednesday (hours will be extended for the OPS in Trail to include services in the evening). Please spread the word and encourage folks to come by to have their samples tested! Additionally, samples can be dropped off at ANKORS anytime for testing – just be sure to leave the appropriate contact information with the sample(s) so that results can be shared with the service user. Samples will be tested as soon as possible upon returning to the office and results will be provided in a timely and discreet manner.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions!

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