



# LOCAL DRUG SAMPLE TESTING UPDATE

Legend: (O) Opioids (B) Benzos (S) Stimulants (A) Other Active Cut

testRI is a two-year study to find out what is in the drug supply in Rhode Island and how changes to the supply are impacting people who use drugs in our community. We are testing used equipment, like pipes and syringes, that are collected from the community or donated by individuals or local organizations. Samples are tested using advanced confirmatory toxicology testing (LC-QTOF-MS).

Data below are from two samples tested in June 2022.

\*Data here only represent a sample of the local drug supply in Rhode Island. Because of that, the samples we have collected and tested may not represent the broader drug supply in the state. Samples are also not being tested in relation to overdose so outcomes from use, like overdose, are unknown.

## Sample date & origin

## Sold as (name or appearance):

## What we found:

\* indicated substances that make up most of a sample

June 2022 Pawtucket



**Crack** (stem pipe and choy)

- Cocaine\* (S)
- Caffeine\* (A)
- Levamisole (A)
- Hydroxyzine (A)
- Phenacetin (A)
- Lidocaine (A)
- Nicotine (A)
- Aminorex (A)

June 2022 Warwick



**Crack** (baggie)

- Cocaine\* (S)
- Fentanyl (O)
- Methadone (O)
- Levamisole (A)

## Why does this matter?

The June 2022 Warwick sample (reported sold as crack) included fentanyl. This is the second sample we have tested reported sold as crack that includes fentanyl. Fentanyl exposure can increase the risk of drug overdose. The overdose risk increases in individuals who do not regularly use opioids and do not have tolerance.

Naloxone (Narcan) will work to treat overdose caused by fentanyl.

Cocaine is a stimulant that can cause elevated blood pressure and fast heart rate. In overdose it can cause heart problems, seizure, stroke, and muscle and/or kidney injury.

The drug supply is volatile and variable. The mixing of drugs with or without the knowledge of people who are using drugs creates higher risk for overdose. It's important to use fentanyl test strips even when using stimulants to check for the presence of fentanyl.

See back page for more info about each substance.

For more info visit: <https://preventoverdoseri.org/local-drug-supply/>

## What we found:

**Aminorex** is a metabolite of levamisole with similar effects to amphetamines. Previously it was marketed as a stimulant/weight loss agent, but was removed from the market by the FDA due to concerns it caused high blood pressure in the lung (pulmonary hypertension).

**Caffeine** is often added to drugs as an active cut for stimulant effects.

**Cocaine** is a stimulant that can cause elevated blood pressure and fast heart rate. In overdose it can cause heart problems, seizure, stroke, and muscle and/or kidney injury.

**Fentanyl** is a highly potent opioid with high risk for overdose. In overdose it can cause problems with breathing and unresponsiveness.

**Hydroxyzine** is an allergy medication sometimes used as a sleep aid that can cause sedation. Levamisole is a medication used to treat worm infections. It is a frequent cut found in cocaine. It can cause problems with blood cells, blood vessels, and/or lead to rashes.

**Lidocaine** is a local anesthetic/numbing agent (e.g., used in dentist offices and for topical pain relief). Lidocaine is a common cut in drugs. At standard doses it is safe, but in very high doses can cause heart problems and/or seizures.

**Methadone** is an opioid used to treat opioid use disorder and pain. In overdose it can cause problems with breathing and unresponsiveness. It can also cause abnormal heart rhythms at high doses.

**Phenacetin** is a common cutting agent in drugs and is a pain reliever. With chronic exposure it can cause kidney and/or liver problems.

For more information about all substances found visit  
[PreventOverdoseRI.org/local-drug-supply/](https://PreventOverdoseRI.org/local-drug-supply/)

## How to reduce risk

Because the drug supply is always changing, it can be hard to know what you are buying. Testing your drugs first with fentanyl test strips can be a good first step.

Having naloxone (Narcan) with you is always important so you can respond to an overdose. It is also important to try not to use alone so someone can help you if you experience an overdose.

Start slow and go slow. Using a little bit of your drug at a time can be helpful to test the strength and keep track of your doses.

Try to avoid mixing depressants or downers, like benzos, opioids, and alcohol when you use. Mixing these can increase your risk of an overdose.

