





LOCAL DRUG SAMPLE TESTING UPDATE

- Legend:
- (O) Opioids
 - (S) Stimulants
 - (A) Other
 - Active Cut
 - (B) Benzodiazepines
 - (C) Cannabinoids
 - (H) Hallucinogen/Dissociative

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 collected in May in Providence and Newport.

*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:
<p>May 2023 Providence</p>	 <p>Fentanyl (aluminum foil)</p>	<p>* indicated substances that make up most of a sample</p> <p>Fentanyl* (O) Acetylfentanyl (O)</p>
<p>May 2023 Newport</p>	 <p>Crysal meth (baggie with white crystals)</p>	<p>Methamphetamine (S)* N-ethylamphetamine (S)</p>

Why does this matter?

In May 2023 we tested a fentanyl sample that contained fentanyl (main) and acetylfentanyl (minor). This sample did not contain xylazine.

Naloxone will reverse the effects of fentanyl, fentanyl analogs and other opioids.

The drug supply is volatile and continuously changing. The mixing of drugs with or without the knowledge of people who are using drugs creates higher risk for overdose.

What we found:

Acetylfentanyl is a fentanyl analog and is considered less potent than fentanyl. Acetylfentanyl can also be a byproduct in fentanyl synthesis. Acetylfentanyl has not been approved for pharmaceutical use and there have been no studies in humans on safety of use. Over the last decade acetylfentanyl has been reported in the drug supply and in fatal overdoses. In overdose, acetylfentanyl can cause sedation and decreased or stopped breathing. Because acetylfentanyl is a fentanyl analogue, naloxone will work to reverse overdose due to acetylfentanyl.

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

Methamphetamine is a stimulant. Risks include heart problems (e.g., abnormal heart rhythm or rate, heart attack, heart failure), high blood pressure, hallucinations, psychosis, and kidney and/or muscle injury.

N-ethylamphetamine is a designer drug with similar structure to amphetamine with amphetamine-like stimulant effects and risk.

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.

