



LOCAL DRUG SAMPLE TESTING UPDATE

Legend: (O) Opioids (B) Benzodiazepines
 (S) Stimulants (C) Cannabinoids
 (A) Other (H) Hallucinogen/
 Active Cut 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 three samples collected in July in Providence and West Warwick.

*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.

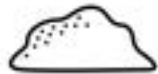
Sample date & origin

Sold as (name or appearance):

What we found:

* indicated substances that make up most of a sample

July 2023
Providence



Fentanyl
(white powder)

Fentanyl* (O)
 Acetylfentanyl (O)
 Cocaine (S)
 Xylazine (A)
 Acetaminophen (A)
 Caffeine (A)
 Acrylfentanyl (O)

July 2023
West Warwick



Fentanyl
(purple powder)

Fentanyl* (O)
 Acetylfentanyl (O)
 Cocaine (S)
 Butyrlfentanyl (O)
 Acrylfentanyl (O)
 Valerylfentanyl (O)

July 2023
Providence



Fentanyl
(yellow/white powder)

Fentanyl* (O)
 Acetylfentanyl (O)

Why does this matter?

In July 2023, we tested several samples reported to be sold as fentanyl. In addition to fentanyl, all the samples had fentanyl analogs and one sample contained minor amounts of xylazine. In all of our testing thus far, xylazine has only been present with fentanyl.

Combining multiple sedatives including opioids (fentanyl and fentanyl analogs) and xylazine can create challenges to determine a safe dose and increase risk for adverse effects including overdose.

See back page for more info about each substance.

For more info visit: testri.org.

Why does this matter?

Give naloxone if you suspect an overdose. Naloxone will reverse the effects of fentanyl, fentanyl analogs and other opioids, but has not been documented to reverse xylazine effects.

What we found:

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is a pain medication frequently added to drugs as an active cut. At standard doses it is safe, but in very high doses it can cause liver injury or failure.

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.

Caffeine is often added to drugs as active cut for stimulant effects or to enhance delivery.

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

Fentanyl analogs are drugs that have a similar chemical structure to fentanyl. Potency estimates of illicitly manufactured fentanyl analogs are most often based on limited data as most have not been approved for use or studied in humans. Because of the toxicity of these drugs, lack of familiarity, inconsistent dose, and mixing into drugs which often already include fentanyl, overdose risk is high. Fentanyl analogs in overdose can cause problems breathing and unresponsiveness.

Naloxone will work to reverse overdose from fentanyl and fentanyl analogs. Fentanyl analogs found in these samples:

Acetylfentanyl

Acrylfentanyl

Butyrylfentanyl

Valerylfentanyl

Xylazine is a veterinary sedative. Xylazine is a long-acting and sedating medication, but it is not an opioid. Especially if combined with other sedating medications it can cause unresponsiveness, low blood pressure, a slowed heart rate, and decreased breathing. Xylazine use has been associated with skin ulcers and infection. Chronic use can also lead to dependence and a withdrawal syndrome that can cause irritability, anxiety, and dysphoria.

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.

