



NorWest Community
Health Centres
Centres de santé
communautaire NorWest



SpectraPlasmonics

DRUG CHECKING SUMMARY

February 2026

28

drug tests completed

5

test results contained only
the expected substance

Samples tested in the month of February were found to contain unexpected substances. Samples presumed to be fentanyl contained cycchlorphine, fluorofentanyl, and medetomidine. Samples presumed to be cocaine contained phenacetin.

82%

of samples contained
unexpected substances



DRUG ALERT:

Medetomidine
continues to show up in
the unregulated opioid
supply. Medetomidine is
a veterinary tranquilizer
not approved for human
consumption.

MEDETOMIDINE

Veterinary Tranquilizer

WHAT IS IT?

Medetomidine is a veterinary tranquilizer approved only for use in animals. It is approximately 200x stronger than xylazine (“tranq”). Signs and symptoms of overdose include deep sedation, lowered heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate.

PREVALENCE

Medetomidine has been consistently showing up in the unregulated opioid supply throughout Ontario, including Thunder Bay.

In the month of February, 6 samples presumed to be fentanyl were submitted to the NorWest Mobile Drug Checking team. 4 out of 6 samples contained medetomidine, or 66.67% of the fentanyl samples submitted.

Between February 7th - 20th, the Ontario Drug Checking Community checked 47 samples presumed to be fentanyl from across Ontario. Of those samples, 85% contained medetomidine. This includes the samples sent by our Mobile Drug Checking team (ODCC, 2026).



CAN I OVERDOSE ON MEDETOMIDINE?

YES! You can overdose on medetomidine. Since it is not an opioid, **Naloxone will NOT reverse an overdose.** Administer Naloxone anyway as medetomidine is often cut into opioids and **call 911.**

DRUG MARKET MONITORING

Understanding what is in the unregulated supply provides clients and the general public with greater knowledge on harm reduction approaches to substance use, as well as how to respond in the event of a complicated overdose.

Medetomidine is often found in samples presumed to be fentanyl which emphasizes the importance of carrying naloxone, starting low and slow when using, and getting one’s drugs checked whenever possible. Always carry naloxone and call 911 if you suspect someone has overdosed.

MOBILE DRUG CHECKING HOURS AND CONTACT

807-630-8631
Monday - Friday
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

