



# Drug Checking

## PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Drug checking refers to using various tools and technologies to determine the general makeup of a substance. Since the drug supply is unpredictable, any sample can contain unexpected or unwanted substances. The more information you have about what's in your substance, the more informed of a decision you can make about your use and how to minimize risk.

**RESULTS IN  
5-10  
MINUTES**

### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER



### WHAT CAN BE TESTED

- YES Pills
- YES Powders
- YES Residue
- NO Plant matter
- NO Burned Material

**CONFIDENTIAL  
AND  
PRIVATE**

### YOUR SAMPLE WILL BE RETURNED

The only time a small amount of your sample cannot be returned is if a test strip is used or sent to the lab for analysis. While the technician may recommend it, **the final decision will always be yours.**

### WHAT TO EXPECT TO LEARN

An FTIR (Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy) machine uses a laser and infrared light to scan and identify the different "ingredients" in a sample.

- It can identify well known drugs, common cuts, and other substances.
- It can give a rough estimate of the amount of each substance.

Many synthetic substances such as fentanyl, benzodiazepines ("Xanax"), xylazine, and others may be present in quantities below what the FTIR can "see." Your technician may suggest using a test strip and sending a small sample to the lab if your drugs do not appear to be what you expected.

### WHAT THE FTIR MACHINE CANNOT DO

1. Detect substances in small amounts (generally less than 5% of a sample)
2. Give exact amounts or percentages
3. May not recognize new or rare substances or adulterants

**You are welcome to ask any questions you may have during any stage of the checking process. The technicians are there to help!**



### MAKE A PLAN ONCE RESULTS ARE IN

- Use new & sterile supplies
- Don't use alone
- Use slowly/small amounts
- Know the signs of overdose
- Have naloxone available
- Avoid mixing substances

**FIND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:  
NMHARMREDUCTION.ORG**