

KRATOM A RISKY ALTERNATIVE

WHAT IS KRATOM?

Kratom is a tropical tree that grows in Southeast Asia, where its leaves are used in traditional medicine. In recent years, kratom has gained popularity in the U.S. as an herbal supplement.

People are experimenting with kratom for relaxation and as an alternative treatment for pain, mood disorders, and opioid withdrawal — all without supervision from doctors. Because kratom can cause physical dependence and isn't regulated, any use comes with real risks.



Dried kratom leaves can be brewed in tea, powdered and added to drinks, or consumed as a capsule, pill, or extract.

IS KRATOM SAFE?



KRATOM AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) calls kratom an opioid because it contains compounds that bind to the brain's opioid receptors.¹ When taken in large doses, kratom's effects are similar to those of morphine, heroin, and other addictive opioids. When ingested in smaller doses, kratom acts as a stimulant.²

KRATOM IS ADDICTIVE.

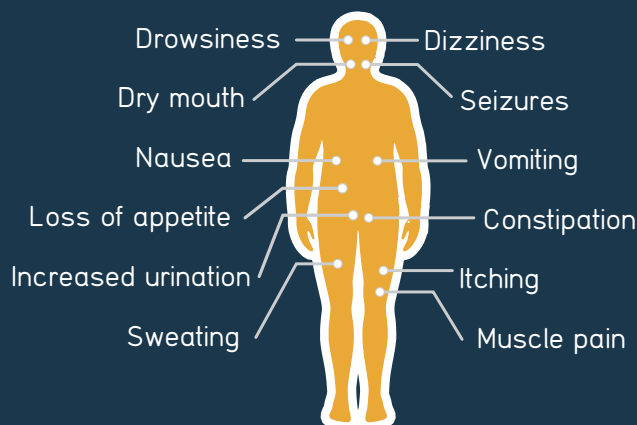
Use of kratom can cause dependence or addiction, and those with a history of addiction or substance abuse are especially at risk. If someone who has developed a physical dependence stops using kratom, they experience physical withdrawal.

Symptoms of withdrawal:

- muscle and joint aches
- insomnia
- irritability
- hostility
- watery eyes
- runny nose
- confusion
- abdominal pain
- jerky movements
- emotional changes
- nausea
- vomiting
- sweating
- anxiety
- diarrhea

KRATOM HAS UNPLEASANT SIDE EFFECTS.

Every drug has side effects, and kratom is no exception. Side effects³ include:



KRATOM IS UNREGULATED AND LEGAL, FOR NOW.

Kratom's unregulated status means it may carry risks beyond side effects and addiction.

Kratom is currently unregulated and legal at the federal level, however, due to serious health risks some state laws ban possession and use. For this same reason, the FDA and Drug Enforcement Administration are reviewing kratom to determine if its active chemicals should be classified as Schedule 1 substances and banned.⁴

KRATOM'S PURITY AND POTENCY ARE NOT CONSISTENT.

The amount of kratom in a given product is not regulated, so it can be difficult for users to control how much of the active ingredient they ingest.

The other ingredients in kratom products are also not regulated, so manufacturers can add substances that might not be safe. In testing different products, FDA scientists have discovered unacceptable levels of heavy metals like lead and nickel, as well as dangerous bacteria like salmonella.⁵ Of the kratom-related deaths on record, most appear to have been caused by adulterated products or users taking kratom with potent substances such as other opioids.



LEARN MORE AT SAMHSA.GOV/KRATOM

If you or someone you know is using kratom, know that there are safer alternatives. Call **SAMHSA's National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or TTY: 1-800-487-4889**, or use **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator at SAMHSA.gov** to get help.

1. <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm595622.htm>

2. <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/kratom>

3. <https://www.drugabuse.gov>

4. <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2016/08/30/dea-announces-intent-schedule-kratom>

5. <https://www.drugabuse.gov>