

WHAT IS KRATOM?

A tropical tree that is indigenous to Southeast Asia, Kratom produces leaves that have been used to relieve pain for hundreds of years. Traditionally, they're eaten raw or crushed and brewed as tea, but they've recently been turned into capsules or tablets. Until fairly recently, Kratom has been easily available for purchase online, but the DEA is taking steps to categorize Kratom as a Schedule I drug—just like heroin, LSD, marijuana, or ecstasy.

The reason for the DEA's move toward a ban is because it's addictive and has no medical use. Some people use Kratom for recreational purposes and others try to self-treat opioid withdrawal, but they can actually cause more harm by continuing their addiction. Most users ingest the drug and can feel the effects quickly—as soon as five to ten minutes. These effects can then last anywhere between five and seven hours. Higher doses can mean even longer side effects.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Kratom interacts with the same type of neurotransmitters as opioids like morphine, codeine, and fentanyl. It works on the central nervous system to relieve pain, but users can also experience feeling high and euphoric.



WHAT DOES IT DO?

Kratom is a unique drug because its effects depend on how much the user takes. Since Kratom has been, until fairly recently, easily obtainable online, there also user guides available online that help the user determine how much to take. For example, in low doses, usually 2 to 6 grams, Kratom is a stimulant. In larger quantities like 7 to 15 grams, it remains a stimulant for some people while acting like a sedative for others. Finally, in 16 to 25 grams, the effects become severely drastic. Not only can the user feel sedated, but hallucinations and delusions are also common.

Potency can vary from batch to batch, so even a person who thinks they're being safe by using this guideline could end up taking much more than they intended. Even though it does not cause the user to stop breathing like other opioids do, death is a very real possibility from Kratom use. According to the DEA, there have been 15 reported Kratom-related deaths between 2014 and 2016.

SHORT TERM EFFECTS

Because Kratom comes from nature, many people mistakenly believe it has no negative side effects. That, unfortunately, is just not true. Many people can feel the negative side effects from Kratom abuse:

- Nervousness or anxiety
- Nausea and vomiting, which can be severe and continuous
- Itching
- Delusions
- Lethargy
- Aggressive or combative behavior
- Sweating
- Tremors
- Hallucinations
- Psychotic episodes



LONG TERM EFFECTS

Although Kratom is relatively new in the United States, it's been a popular painkiller in different parts of Asia. Many people report having long term negative side effects like:

- Weight loss
- Loss of libido
- Changes in skin color, especially darkening of the face
- Addiction
- More likely to suffer withdrawal symptoms

WITHDRAWALS

Many people mistakenly believe Kratom is actually a safe drug to take, especially when trying to treat opioid withdrawals. However, Kratom comes with its own set of withdrawal symptoms like:

- Muscle pain
- Muscle tremors
- Sleeplessness
- Diarrhea
- Severe depression
- Panic attacks
- Mood swings
- Extreme irritability

