



# KRATOM

## What You Need To Know

### What is Kratom?

Kratom is a drug with stimulant effects (in low doses) and opioid effects (in high doses)<sup>1</sup>. Kratom is made from leaves from a tree (*Mitragyna speciosa*) native to Southeast Asia that are crushed and then smoked, brewed with tea, or placed into gel capsules. The primary ingredient in kratom is mitragynine, and also contains a smaller amount of 7-Hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). Kratom is marketed as a drug that relieves pain and helps with anxiety and depression. Kratom use can lead to physical dependence, be dangerous and cause harm.

### Kratom vs. 7-OH Extracts

Natural kratom leaves and products with concentrated or synthetic 7-OH are not the same. Many extracts are sold as “kratom extract” or “enhanced kratom” but actually contain 7-OH. Products marketed in this way may look like regular kratom products on store shelves but carry much higher risks, including overdose and death. There is also a concern that products made from kratom, in high doses, can cause psychosis.

### Kratom Effects

Kratom use may produce a feeling of increased energy in low-doses and in higher doses can produce opioid-like effects, including pain relief. There is a concern that mixing kratom use with alcohol, opioids, and other drugs can risk the risk of overdose and death. Short-term adverse effects of kratom can include nausea, constipation, dizziness, and dry mouth. Kratom products are not regulated so risk containing different materials sometimes chemicals and plants that are not related to kratom. As a result, kratom’s effects can vary from person to person.<sup>2</sup>

General side effects of kratom include<sup>3</sup>:

Nausea • Constipation • Dizziness • Discoloration of the cheeks • Drowsiness  
• Dry mouth • Euphoria • Sleep disturbances • Increased sociability • Nervousness or restlessness (increased energy and excitability) • Respiratory depression or slowed breathing • Sweating • Vomiting

### Is Kratom legal?

No. According to the FDA, it is illegal to sell kratom products in the U.S. as a drug product, dietary supplement, or a food additive in conventional food. The FDA warns that kratom products present a risk of illness or injury, including death.

Kratom and 7-OH products may not be sold in California as drug products, dietary supplements, or food additives.

### Kratom Contamination

Contamination in herbal supplements like kratom includes excess traces of heavy metals and bacteria<sup>2</sup>. The FDA has issued numerous warnings about kratom contamination, including on the risk of developing heavy metal toxicity and exposure to contamination from salmonella<sup>1</sup>.

### Reducing Harm When Using Kratom

If you or a loved one uses kratom or 7-OH products:

- **Do not mix** with alcohol, opioids, or other drugs due to significantly elevated overdose risk.
- **Never use alone** — have someone nearby in case of emergency.
- **Keep naloxone nearby** — In an overdose, it can reverse the effects of 7-OH and restore breathing.
- **Call 911 immediately** if someone becomes unresponsive.
- If a Los Angeles County resident is looking for help with reducing or stopping the use of kratom or 7-OH, call the **Substance Abuse Service Helpline** (SASH): 800-854-7771.

### For Emergencies:

Call 911

California Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222 (available 24 hours/7-days a week)

### To file a complaint:

To report kratom sold in unauthorized locations: The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) at 1(800) 495-3232 or report complaint online.

### For more kratom information:

<https://www.dea.gov/factsheets/kratom>

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/fda-and-kratom>

<https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/kratom>

More information about public health services related to substance use in LA County is accessible through the mobile-friendly RecoverLA platform: [www.RecoverLA.org](http://www.RecoverLA.org)

Medi-Cal members can find substance use treatment services through the resources below:

- Services and Bed Availability Tool: <http://SUDHelpLA.org>
- Substance Abuse Service Helpline: 1-844-804-7500

### References:

- (1) <http://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/fda-and-kratom>
- (2) <https://nida.nih.gov/research-topics/kratom>
- (3) [http://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Kratom-2020\\_0.pdf](http://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Kratom-2020_0.pdf)

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