



Alert! For Healthcare and Other Professionals



What is Kratom?

Kratom is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia, with leaves that contain compounds that can have psychotropic (mind-altering) effects.

- ❑ Most people take Kratom as a pill, capsule, or extract. Some people chew kratom leaves or brew the dried or powdered leaves as a tea. Sometimes the leaves are smoked or eaten in food.

Source: [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)

Compound Chemistry and Health Effects

- ❑ The two active compounds in kratom leaves are *mitragynine* and *7- α -hydroxymitragynine*.
- ❑ Small doses = stimulant effects Large doses = depressant effects
- ❑ Kratom can cause vomiting, chills, itching, and loss of appetite. Long-term can cause extreme weight loss, skin darkening, frequent need to urinate, constipation, muscle pain, and liver damage. Kratom may also cause dizziness, delusions and seizures. It may suppress your breathing and lead to coma and death.

Source: [Mayo Clinic](#)

Why do people use Kratom?

- ❑ Kratom interacts with the brain's opioid receptors, some people use it to relieve pain or overcome opioid addiction. As medical communities try to shy away from opioid use for pain, many patients who previously relied on them no longer can. Individuals scrambling to find alternatives, may be turning to kratom because it has similar pain-relieving effects.
- ❑ People tend (however incorrectly) to think that kratom is safe because it's "natural."

Is Kratom Addictive?

- ❑ The FDA is concerned that Kratom, which affects the same opioid brain receptors as morphine, appears to have properties that expose users to the risks of addiction, abuse, and dependence.

Source: [U.S Food and Drug Administration](#)

Like other drugs with opioid-like effects, withdrawal symptoms include:

- muscle aches
- insomnia
- irritability
- hostility
- aggression
- emotional changes
- runny nose
- jerky movements

Source: [National Institute of Drug Abuse](#)

Laws and Regulations

- ❑ Kratom is unregulated at the federal level, which means states control the legality. Some states banned the substance, while other have passed regulation, such as minimum age for purchase. Kratom is not currently regulated in Michigan.
Source: [National Institute of Drug Abuse](#)
- ❑ The FDA encourages health care professionals and consumers to report any adverse reactions to the FDA's [MedWatch](#) program.
Source: [U.S Food and Drug Administration](#)

Pregnancy

- ❑ When Kratom is used during pregnancy, the baby may be born with symptoms of withdrawal that require treatment and it can adversely affects infant development.
Source: [Kratom: Unsafe and ineffective - Mayo Clinic](#)
- ❑ Pregnant women and those trying to conceive should be advised to stop taking Kratom. You can help your patients find safer, more effective ways to treat symptoms of pregnancy.
Source: [Kratom and pregnancy: Not a safe mix - Mayo Clinic](#)

Why be concerned?

- ❑ Kratom contain at least 25 poisonous compounds. One of these compounds is considered a "true opiate" and is **ten times more potent than morphine by weight**.
Source: <https://www.drugs.com/illicit/kratom.html>
- ❑ Currently, Kratom is not included in standard drug screens in the US. Separate Kratom tests are available.
Source: [Drugs.com](#)
- ❑ Poison control centers in the U.S. received about 1,800 reports involving use of Kratom from 2011 through 2017, including reports of death. By comparison, in 2019 alone, 1,357 calls to Poison Control Centers involved exposure to Kratom.
Source: [Kratom: Unsafe and ineffective - Mayo Clinic](#)
Source: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15563650.2020.1834219>

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to speak to a specialist or toxicologist about Kratom, contact the Michigan Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 or 313-486-0078 (locally).

The Following Organizations and Agencies Provide Information about Kratom (Search Kratom):

National Institute on Drug Abuse <https://www.drugabuse.gov/>

Mayo Clinic <https://www.mayoclinic.org/>

US Drug and Food Administration <https://www.fda.gov/>

Drugs.com www.drugs.com

US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) www.dea.gov

To access resources and information about preventing youth substance use in your community, visit cvcoalition.org.