

Kratom Addiction and Abuse

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Most people have heard of common drugs of abuse like heroin, cocaine and marijuana, but one substance you may not be familiar with is kratom. While this isn't a particularly well-known drug of abuse, it can lead to addiction and other serious side effects. Fortunately, professional rehab facilities like Orlando Recovery Center are equipped to treat those struggling with kratom abuse and addiction.

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What Is Kratom?

Kratom is an herbal substance that can have both [opioid and stimulant-like effects](#), and it comes from a [tropical tree in Southeast Asia](#). In Thailand, kratom has [historically been used](#) to help laborers and farmers work harder, gain energy and relieve muscle pains. Kratom has no approved medical use in the United States. While it is a legal substance and there is ongoing research into its potential medicinal uses, there is also much debate on its safety and potential for abuse and addiction.

In February 2018, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [published a memo](#) stating there is currently no reliable scientific evidence that supports the medical use of kratom. The FDA also said that kratom shouldn't be used as a prescription opioid alternative or a treatment for opioid withdrawal symptoms.

In 2016, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) [published a notice](#) indicating they were going to put kratom on their Schedule I list, which is the most restrictive classification of the Controlled Substances Act. While this move didn't end up occurring due largely to public outcry, many states have decided to ban kratom.

Since kratom isn't federally regulated in the United States, the drug is often marketed as an herbal supplement. It is sometimes touted as a [natural pain reliever](#), mood enhancer, anxiety reliever or replacement for people addicted to opioids. People may purchase it online or in smoke shops.

How Do People Take Kratom?

Kratom leaves are used to make powder, tea and capsules, and there are many different ways people take kratom.

Kratom Leaves

Kratom leaves contain [psychoactive ingredients](#) that cause stimulant and sedative effects. The leaves can be crushed and smoked, used to brew tea or placed in capsules to be swallowed. In some cases, kratom leaves are dried and made into a powder. The leaf may also be [chewed whole](#).

Kratom Powder

Kratom powder is made from kratom leaves. The leaves are crushed into a [light to dark green powder](#). Beige-brown kratom powders may contain extracts from other leaves. Kratom powder can be mixed in a drink or food, made into a tea or taken in the [‘toss and wash’ method](#). This involves tossing the powder in your mouth and washing it down with water.

Kratom Capsules

To avoid the bitterness of kratom tea/powder and make dosing easier, kratom can also be found in capsules. [Capsules](#) are filled with pre-measured doses of kratom powder. Kratom capsules come in various sizes, each containing different amounts of kratom powder. Capsules are easily swallowed with a glass of water.

Kratom Tea

[Kratom tea](#) can also be made from the crushed leaves of the tree. Kratom powder or crushed leaves are added to a tea bag and steeped in hot water for 10 minutes. Sweeteners like honey or agave nectar are sometimes added to mask the bitterness of the kratom.

Kratom Side Effects

In addition to the desired stimulant and sedative effects kratom users experience, there are [several physical and psychological side effects](#) of kratom that may be undesirable. Some of the [side effects of kratom](#) include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Itching
- Dry mouth
- Sweating
- Constipation
- Loss of appetite
- Drowsiness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Rapid heart rate
- Seizures
- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Confusion
- Psychosis

Is Kratom Addictive?

According to the DEA, kratom is a [drug and chemical of concern](#), but it is not federally regulated as a controlled substance. [Drugs of concern](#) like kratom pose risks to individuals who abuse them. Kratom use can lead to [psychotic symptoms and dependence](#).

Kratom can be especially addictive when taken in [high doses](#), as this results in effects similar to those of opioid drugs. High doses of kratom also lead to sedation and feelings of euphoria. As is the case with opioids, withdrawing from kratom after long-term use leads to unpleasant side effects, including mood swings, aggressive behavior and sore muscles.

Can You Overdose on Kratom?

While overdosing on kratom is possible, it is rare. A [CDC report](#) found that between July 2016 and December 2017, 152 deceased individuals tested positive for kratom. Of these deaths, kratom was responsible for 91. However, of those 91 deaths, only [seven tested positive](#) for the presence of kratom alone. Most [kratom-positive deaths](#) involved other substances, such as [fentanyl](#), [heroin](#), [benzos](#), [prescription opioids](#) or [cocaine](#).

How Long Does Kratom Stay in Your System?

There are few studies on how long kratom stays in your system. Studies on [kratom levels and metabolism](#) have mainly been performed in animals, and results vary greatly depending on the dosage form and amount of kratom used. A study of 10 male volunteers who ingested kratom tea showed an average half-life of [23.2 hours](#). A half-life is the amount of time it takes your body to get rid of half the drug's amount in your system.

Kratom's half-life varies greatly from person to person and depends significantly on the amount of kratom ingested. Other factors that can affect how long kratom stays in your system are the type of kratom used, age, health problems such as kidney or liver disease, [the use of other drugs](#) and how often you use kratom.

Routine drug tests do not test for kratom, but urine tests are available that detect [mitragynine](#), a kratom metabolite. These tests can be ordered if kratom use is suspected. Based on the half-life of kratom, it would be detectable in urine for about five days.

Kratom Abuse

Kratom has only recently been added to surveys on drug use, abuse and dependence, making it difficult to assess the abuse potential for this substance. More studies are needed to determine the appropriate use of kratom and its risk of addiction and abuse. Kratom abuse statistics include:

- Around [20% of kratom users](#) are considered at risk of having a kratom use disorder.

- In 2019, an estimated [0.7% of the U.S. population](#) aged 12 and older used kratom within the past year.
- According to a [2017 survey](#), around 9.9% of adult kratom users met the criteria for mild kratom substance use disorder, 1.8% for moderate kratom use disorder and 0.6% for severe kratom use disorder.

Signs of Kratom Abuse

There are no defined criteria for kratom use disorder, but guidelines for determining other substance use disorders are commonly used. You may be abusing kratom if you:

- Frequently take large amounts of kratom to feel euphoric or get “high”
- Use kratom for recreational purposes

Kratom Addiction

Kratom addiction occurs when the psychological and physical effects of kratom use start to interfere with your everyday life.

Signs of Kratom Addiction

[Signs of kratom addiction](#) can include:

1. You take kratom in larger amounts and for a longer period of time than intended.
2. You want to or have tried to cut down or stop using kratom but have been unsuccessful.
3. You spend a lot of time trying to get kratom, using kratom or recovering from kratom use.
4. You have a strong craving or desire to use kratom.
5. You have had troubles at work, school or home because of kratom use.
6. You continue to use kratom even though it has caused problems with your relationships and social situations.
7. You have stopped doing activities that were once important to you or you enjoyed doing.
8. You place yourself in dangerous situations because of your kratom use.
9. You continue to use kratom even though it negatively affects your physical and mental health.
10. You need to take more kratom to get the same effect you used to.
11. You suffer from withdrawal symptoms when you stop using kratom.

Kratom Withdrawal

Kratom is sometimes used to alleviate the severe symptoms associated with opioid withdrawal. However, the prolonged use of kratom may result in [mild withdrawal symptoms](#) when kratom use is stopped.

Kratom Withdrawal Symptoms

Kratom [withdrawal symptoms](#) may include:

- Hostility and aggression
- Frequent emotional changes
- Achy muscles and bones
- Jerky movement of the limbs

[Kratom psychosis](#) has been reported in some people suffering from kratom withdrawal. Psychotic symptoms may include:

- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Confusion

Kratom Detox

[Kratom detox](#) is often the first step in an effective kratom addiction treatment plan, in which the body rids itself of all of the kratom in its system. This process can trigger kratom withdrawal and cravings. In a professional medical setting, detox can be individualized to meet the needs of the person undergoing kratom withdrawal.

Our [medical detox](#) program offers 24-hour medical support and medication-assisted treatment when appropriate to make the experience as comfortable and safe as possible. Medical detox programs can also treat withdrawal from multiple addictions at once if you struggle with kratom and another substance, called polysubstance abuse.

Kratom Addiction Treatment

Unregulated herbal products like kratom have the potential to be addictive and lead to physical dependence. These products can also have different additives and ingredients that can be dangerous. Self-medicating with anything that's not well-researched or standardized can be harmful or even deadly. [Kratom addiction treatment](#) can help.

At professional treatment facilities like the [Orlando Recovery Center](#), addiction experts develop detailed substance abuse treatment plans after an initial intake and evaluation. This approach helps outline a plan for managing withdrawal symptoms and drug cravings, as well as addressing the underlying reasons for kratom use.

Following a medical detox, Orlando Recovery Center offers [inpatient](#) and [outpatient care](#) at varying levels of intensity. [Available treatment programs](#) include:

- Medical detox
- Inpatient/residential treatment
- Partial hospitalization program
- Intensive outpatient services
- Outpatient care
- Teletherapy programs
- Individual and group therapy
- Family and couples counseling
- Nutritional counseling and dietary planning
- Life skills training
- Fitness therapy
- Case management
- Aftercare planning

If you or someone you love is struggling with kratom addiction or a substance use disorder, the Orlando Recovery Center can help. [Contact us](#) today to take the first step on your road to a healthier, substance-free future in recovery.

844-716-0929

[Sources](#)
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