

Kratom Info Sheet

What is kratom and how does it work?

Kratom is an herbal substance that works by attaching to opioid receptors in the brain. At low doses, it produces stimulant effects. Higher doses result in pain-reducing and sedating effects. It is usually taken by mouth as a pill, tea, or chewed leaves. It can also be inhaled. Major risks associated are dependence, overdose, and seizure.



Dependence and withdrawal

Negative effects of kratom can be: dry mouth, delusional thinking, psychosis, itch, constipation, seizures, excessive urination, and sweating.

- **Dependence** can occur when a person takes kratom often and consistently so that when they stop taking it, they experience unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. Many people take kratom and don't realize that it could be harmful or that dependence can occur.
- **Withdrawal** occurs when the kratom use is stopped. People can experience symptoms very similar to opioid withdrawal such as anxiety, agitation, muscle spasms, runny nose, hot flashes, loss of appetite, diarrhea, restlessness and fever.



Overdose

- Overdose death has been associated with the use of kratom. Most often, it occurs with the use of other substances in addition to kratom. Mixing substances can increase risk for overdose.
- There is also a risk of the kratom having other unknown dangerous substances mixed with it that could increase risk for overdose.

Treatment

- Kratom dependence can be treated with medications for opioid use disorder such as buprenorphine.
- It is important to tell your healthcare team about your kratom use and if you are currently using any opioids (e.g., fentanyl, heroin, oxycodone, methadone, etc.) to avoid precipitated withdrawal when starting buprenorphine.
- In addition to medications for opioid use disorder, counseling and mutual support groups are effective treatments to support recovery.