



Emerging Drug Brief: Kratom

Updated April 28, 2026

This publication is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$17,000,000, with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. A portion of this funding supported the project described in this material. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CDC/HHS, the U.S. Government, or the CDC Foundation.

Purpose: This brief provides a summary of current information on Kratom. It outlines the drug, its risk, availability and accessibility across the United States of America.

Key Takeaways:

- Kratom and the concentrated composition of the psychoactive ingredient, 7- hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), are widely available. Twenty-six states do not regulate the sale, use or possession of Kratom or its byproducts. Kratom is sold in multiple forms (e.g., drinks, capsules, edibles), which may mislead consumers about its risks or appropriate dosing.^{1,2}
- 7-OH is found in trace amounts in the kratom plant leaf and can be up to 13 times more potent than morphine. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has identified some commercially available products which contain 7- OH concentrations at up to 500 percent higher than what naturally occurs in the kratom leaf. These products are associated with typical opioid-like adverse effects including tolerance, withdrawal, insomnia, anxiety, seizures and fatal respiratory depression.³
- The FDA forecasts that as the rate of fatal fentanyl deaths decreases, the next wave of overdose deaths could be attributed to 7-OH due to increased use and availability.¹
- There is some data to support naloxone being effective in reversing the effects and symptoms of kratom overdose. Providers should consult their local protocols when supporting the respiratory system.^{4,5}
- Prevention and recovery partners may see increased use within their populations. Brightly packaged and varied product forms may lead individuals to perceive kratom as a “safer” alternative to opioids or stimulants.^{1,6}

Background: Kratom is a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia. Consumption of its leaves produces both stimulant effects (in low doses) and sedative effects (in high doses), and can lead to psychotic symptoms, psychological and physiological dependence.

Kratom leaves contain two major psychoactive ingredients (mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine). These leaves can be crushed and then smoked, brewed with tea or placed into gel capsules. Kratom has a long history of use in Southeast Asia, where it is commonly known as thang, kakuam, thom, ketum and biak.⁶



Figure 1. Dried kratom leaves can be brewed in tea, powdered and added to drinks, or consumed as a capsule, pill or extract.

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/media/187900/download>

² <https://legislativeanalysis.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Kratom-Summary-of-State-Laws.pdf>

³ <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-takes-steps-restrict-7-oh-opioid-products-threatening-american-consumers>

⁴ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10408695/>

⁵ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10408695/>

⁶ https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/Kratom-2020_0.pdf

Availability: While kratom is not currently scheduled under federal law, the FDA consider kratom and 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) unapproved for any medical use and has repeatedly warned consumers not to use these products.²

Marketing and product design: Kratom products which include shots, gummies, tablets, capsules and powders, are often marketed in brightly colored packaging resembling energy drinks or candy. This may give consumers the false impression these products are safe or 'natural' alternatives to prescription opioids or stimulants.¹

The FDA and other public health agencies have signaled particular concern regarding highly concentrated or synthetic 7-OH products, which can be much more potent than morphine at the mu-opioid receptor and have been linked to serious overdoses and deaths. Recent FDA communications indicate 7-OH products could play a significant role in future opioid-related overdoses if their availability and misuse increase.^{1,2,6}

Hiding in Plain Sight: 7-OH Products are Designed to Look Like Everyday Treats Like Gummies, Candies and Ice Cream.



Note: These images are select illustrative examples and do not represent the full scope of 7-OH products on the market. Consumers should read packaging and labels carefully to determine whether a product contains 7-OH.

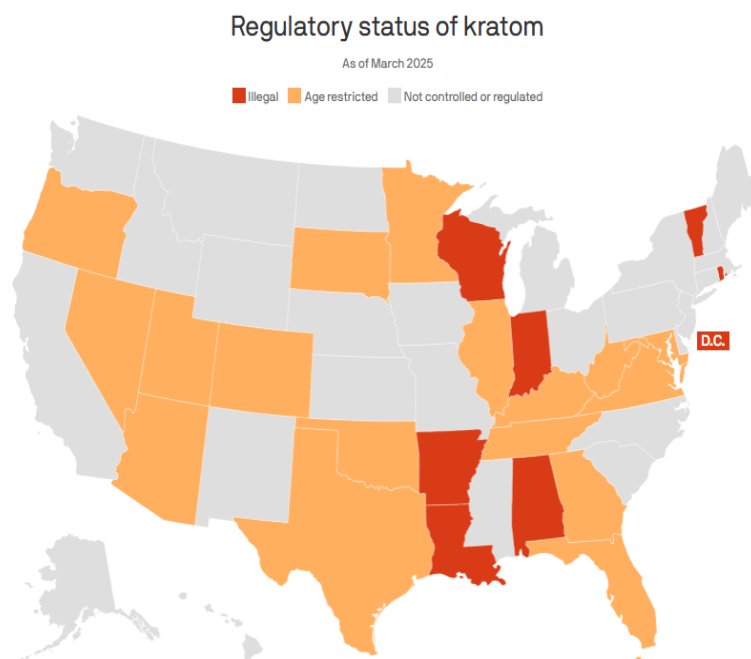


Preventing The Next Wave of the Opioid Epidemic: What You Need to Know About 7-OH

Figure 2. Kratom derived 7-OH products can be packaged in brightly colored and allude to being a safe alternative to prescription opioids or stimulants.

Naloxone reaction to kratom overdose: There have been several documented cases of naloxone successfully reversing an opioid toxidrome attributed to recreational kratom use.^{4,5}

Regulatory information: As of April 2025, 24 states and the District of Columbia regulate kratom or its components, ranging from complete bans to 'Kratom Consumer Protection Acts' which set age limits and require testing and labeling.^{1,2}



Data: [Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association](#); Note: Louisiana's kratom ban goes into effect Aug. 1, 2025; Map: Axios Visuals

Figure 3. Regulatory status of kratom in the United States of America.