
AMERICAN KRATOM ASSOCIATION

The American Kratom Association (or AKA, www.americankratom.org), is a non-profit organization formed in 2014 by consumers to protect our right to use kratom as a natural, herbal remedy. We do not profit off the sale of kratom; we owe our quality of lives to it. We have several hundred dues-paying members, a network of 2,400 supporters and over 15,000 Facebook and Twitter followers. We are mostly professionals in our 30's, 40's and 50's -- productive members of society managing illnesses and ailments with kratom.

What is Kratom?

Kratom, or *Mitragyna speciosa*, is a tree in the coffee family native to Southeast Asia. Its leaves have been consumed in countries like Thailand and Malaysia for well over 500 years. Farmers and laborers traditionally used it in much the same way as coffee – to boost energy and increase productivity. Today Americans use kratom for things like fatigue, pain, depression, anxiety, PTSD, to ease themselves off opiates and to help manage addiction. Kratom is now consumed in the U.S. just like other herbal supplements and remedies, as more and more people look to natural alternatives to manage their health.

What Kratom is not

Kratom is not new. Kratom is not synthetic. Kratom is not an opiate. It is not dangerous when used responsibly, nor is it highly addictive. The media likes to report, among other inaccuracies, that kratom causes hallucinations, paranoia and/or psychosis when there is no scientific or even anecdotal evidence to back such claims. It was not banned in its native Thailand because it's dangerous, but because it was cutting into the government's opium tax.

Kratom has proven medicinal use

Many studies have shown kratom to have positive medicinal benefits. A 2015 study in *Dove Press Journal* concluded kratom merits further study to develop its medical benefits, as a better opioid substitute, with fewer lethal side effects, or as an effective pain killer. A 2014 study in the *Journal of Pacific Cancer Prevention* even concluded the benefits of the leaves are not limited to analgesic properties but could be promising antioxidant and anti-cancer compounds. It's no wonder at least 4 patents have been filed on the primary constituents of the plant!

Adverse reactions from kratom are not pervasive

The National Forensic Laboratory Information System, the DEA database that collects information from forensic labs throughout the country shows kratom appears in just a fraction of one percent of all reports for substances in 2013 (173 times) and 2014 (137 times). Contrast that with an over the counter pain reliever like acetaminophen (the main ingredient in Tylenol) which sends 78,000 people to the Emergency Room each year.

Kratom is not habit forming when used responsibly

Kratom is non-habit forming, unless taken in high doses for extended periods of time. Users may experience dependence (similar to caffeine dependence) and discomfort on stopping

excessive, daily use abruptly. Taken in excess it will cause nausea and vomiting; its own built-in safety mechanism.

How people consume Kratom

Traditionally leaves were chewed or steeped into a tea. Today the leaves are dried and powdered to be used in dietary supplements, as a tea, taken in straight powder form or in capsules.

Legality of Kratom

Kratom is legal in all states but Indiana, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Vermont and Arkansas. These states have laws based largely on the misconception that kratom is a synthetic drug. The Wisconsin Controlled Substances Board is in the process of removing its ban. Dr. Alan Bloom, Board member and professor of pharmacology and toxicology said recently, "There's no scientific basis for it" (classifying kratom as a dangerous drug). The Florida State Senate recently recognized kratom has medicinal value and changed a bill attempting to outlaw it to allow adults to consume, possess and sell it.

Florida Department of Law Enforcement Report

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) released a December 2015 report titled *Kratom - Mitragyna speciosa, The Impact to Florida* and found, "Kratom does not currently constitute a significant risk to the safety and welfare of Florida residents. Additionally the report sites that the Florida Department of Health found there are no pervasive health issues can be attributed to the ingestion Kratom products in Florida."

Noteworthy quotes

Ryan Estevez, MD, Tampa Bay, Florida: "In recent years, kratom has been widely misrepresented as dangerous and without medical value. These disturbing labels overlook the fact that valuable remedies and dietary supplements derived from kratom benefit lives. Kratom, in fact, is not a drug at all: It is a plant derivative no more dangerous than a cup of coffee."

Jane Maxwell, Research Professor at the Addiction Research Institute at the University of Texas: When asked about the impact and presence of kratom across the U.S., "It's pretty minor."

Conclusion

In the words of Dr. Christopher McCurdy, head researcher at the University of Mississippi (where kratom has most recently been studied in the U.S.): "Based on the information available in the scientific literature, we know that Kratom has been utilized for centuries by people in Thailand, without stigma associated with its use. In traditional medicine, Kratom has been used as an antidiarrheal and as a treatment for opioid dependence. Although there are suggestions that Kratom has a risk of addiction, there is no solid scientific evidence available to support or refute this idea."

Kratom is safely relieving mental and physical suffering in the lives of adults all across America. We support further scientific study of the plant, and oppose legislation that will turn responsible kratom users into criminals.

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