What is kratom? What are kratom-derived substances, like 7-OH and MP?

Kratom is an opioid derived from the Mitragyna speciosa plant, native to Southeast Asia.

Kratom leaves contain two major psychoactive ingredients, **mitragynine** and 7-hydroxymytragynine (**7-OH**). These substances can be concentrated and chemically modified to produce enhanced mitragynine and 7-OH products, as well as mitragynine pseudoindoxyl (**MP**), **MGM-15** and **MGM-16** – extremely potent, semi-synthetic opioid compounds.

How do kratom and kratom-derived substances affect the human body? What are the known side effects?

Once ingested, kratom and its derivatives – 7-OH, MP, MGM-15 and MGM-16 – bind to opioid receptors in the brain, similar to heroin, morphine and fentanyl. Kratom produces **stimulant effects in low doses** and **sedative effects in high doses**, lasting for several hours.

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), known side effects of kratom include liver toxicity, seizures, substance use disorder and, in rare cases, death. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), state health authorities have linked the use of 7-OH products and concentrated extracts to **dependence, addiction, acute psychosis, slowed breathing, cardiac arrest and death**.

Kratom-derived 7-OH has been identified by the DEA as having a **similar abuse potential to heroin or fentanyl** and is known to be **13-fold more potent than morphine**. Other kratom-derived compounds, like MP, are known to be **20-fold more potent than morphine**.

What is the legal status of kratom and kratom-derived substances?

Kratom and most kratom-derived substances are not federally regulated or age restricted under the *Controlled Substances Act*. Rather, kratom and its potent derivatives are sold over the counter across the country, available to all age groups and marketed as "natural" energy boosters, mood lifters and pain relievers.

Is there a medical use for kratom?

The FDA has not approved kratom for medical use, and the DEA has listed kratom as a Drug of Concern.

Is kratom abuse on the rise?

Yes. According to the National Drug Early Warning System and National Poison Data System, nonfatal overdoses involving kratom, mitragynine or 7-OH were recorded across 38 states from 2023 to 2026. Over the last 10 years, poison control centers saw a 1,200% increase in kratom exposure reports.

How did DEA's temporary scheduling order change from July to October 2026?

On July 6, 2026, following an initial recommendation from FDA, DEA announced their intent to temporarily place kratom products containing more than **0.05% of 7-OH or any level of MP, MGM-15 or MGM-16** into Schedule I of the *Controlled Substances Act*, meaning they have no accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.

On August 26, 2026, DEA issued its temporary scheduling order to place kratom products containing **any level of MP, MGM-15 or MGM-16** into Schedule I of the *Controlled Substances Act*.

After receiving a new recommendation from FDA, DEA withdrew the August temporary scheduling order and announced its intent to set a more permissive 7-OH and MP limit, doubling the 7-OH limit and allowing concentrations of both chemicals at higher levels than what is found naturally in the kratom plant. DEA presented no new evidence that the substances are safe to use at below-threshold levels.