

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Does Kratom Show Potential for Abuse?

Our Friends · Monday, February 8th, 2021

Kratom comes from the crushed leaves of *Mitragyna speciosa*, a tree native to Southeast Asia. For centuries, people in the area have used the leaves for focus, help with discomfort, and other wellness reasons.

Today, people drink Kratom tea to boost motivation, induce a sense of calm in the evening, or enhance recovery after exercise. However, some people are concerned about the potential for abuse.

Until recently, Kratom has been a botanical mired in mystery and misunderstandings and was almost classified as a scheduled substance by the DEA in 2016 before public outcry stopped the process. Unlike other substances, Kratom has little potential for abuse, as shown by the wide, long-term use in Southeast Asia and today's current US users.

What is Kratom?

Before they're ready to ingest, Kratom leaves go through an extensive preparation process, including drying and crushing them. Depending on how long the leaves dry in the sun or are fermented in bags, they become red, white, or green Kratom powder, which consumers use for different purposes.

Most people either take a capsule or make Kratom tea, adding honey and sometimes an herbal tea bag for taste. You can buy Kratom online through a reputable kratom vendor like [Kats Botanicals](#) to ensure you get a premium, high-quality product you can trust.

What Makes a Substance More Likely to Cause Dependency?

Besides substances, people can become dependent on gambling, sex, and gaming. This happens when any behavior becomes compulsive and detrimental, meaning you choose that particular behavior over other aspects of your life.

Whether a substance can cause dependency comes down to science and the way it affects your brain. Some drugs like opioids alter your brain chemistry, making your brain think it needs the substance above all else.

However, many substances that alter your brain chemistry in different ways don't invite abuse, including products like Kratom and CBD. There is little to [no abuse of CBD](#) stated in recent studies.

How Kratom Affects Your Brain

There are two specific compounds in Kratom that affect your brain, 7-?-hydroxymitragynine and mitragynine, as well as the MG alkaloid. When used in the recommended dosage, these compounds may increase your motivation or encourage peaceful rest in the evenings by interacting with certain receptors in your brain. Like many substances, Kratom activates your brain's reward circuit.

However, unlike harmful drugs, Kratom doesn't overwhelm your brain's rewards receptors. This

means that although it can help improve your wellbeing, you won't experience an overwhelming rush of dopamines that you cannot replicate naturally.

Instead, these two compounds may give your brain a nudge, similar to caffeine. However, like with caffeine, very high doses over a long time could cause some problematic tendencies.

Unlike codeine, the MG alkaloid present in Kratom produces little to no respiratory depression, making it less likely to cause problems in the user's life.

In Southeast Asia, outdoor workers who had to do hard, manual labor for extended hours a day would eat Kratom leaves to maintain their sense of wellbeing. Several studies point to this overuse as one of the few times Kratom could potentially cause abuse. However, despite the high doses these workers consumed, they didn't exhibit any outward changes in their personality, like prioritizing Kratom over other things.

If you use Kratom to motivate you, help increase your productivity, or make you calmer in the evenings, the effect on your brain will likely not be long-lasting.

Why Drinking Kratom Lowers Potential For Abuse

A significant factor in the potential for abuse is the method used to take a substance. [Drinking Kratom tea](#) balances the dosage with liquid, and oral consumption means the body can absorb the substance slower instead of directly into your bloodstream. Like caffeine, this decreases the potential for abuse by reducing the effects.

The lower concentration of MG and other compounds in Kratom, as well as the relatively higher percentage of cellulose fiber, makes it harder to abuse due to the quantity of crushed leaves you would need to consume for a euphoric feeling. You would find it challenging to drink enough Kratom tea to abuse it.

Taking Kratom orally means your body cannot absorb the entirety of the dose, reducing the possibility of abuse. Similar to poppy seeds, which contain opium alkaloids but not in high quantities, the amount of Kratom absorbed by the body orally doesn't provide enough dopamine to cause the potential for abuse.

Low Potential for Psychological and Physical Abuse

Partially because of the relatively low-impact effects of Kratom, most users are unlikely to become dependent on it. Other substances that result in a high or other euphoric feeling have a much higher potential for abuse since the brain cannot create that feeling naturally.

Unlike these substances, Kratom merely helps you improve your motivation or encourages you to be positive. Because there isn't a euphoric feeling to chase, your brain is significantly less likely to become hooked.

The physical side effects of large doses of Kratom also deter dependency. Before you can reach the large quantities required for the potential for abuse, most people will experience uncomfortable side effects, including stomach issues, lethargy, and a decreased impact on your motivation and positivity. Since most Kratom users wish to improve their motivation or overall wellbeing, taking it in these large doses is counter-effective.

Choose a Reliable, Trustworthy Company

Like with anything you eat, drink, or take, knowing what's going into your body is essential. Ensure you only purchase your Kratom from a trustworthy company that is open about their harvesting, importing, and drying process. Less reputable companies could add other dangerous fillers into your Kratom or not process out harmful molds or heavy metals completely.

Also, ask the company for their third-party lab test results of the final product, which shows that the powder is high-quality.

As long as you take Kratom as recommended and don't take too high doses long-term, the potential for abuse is low. Most people who take Kratom use it for wellness, whether to help with motivation, improve their overall health, or ease stress in their daily lives.

Contrary to items such as alcohol, it is more likely that most Kratom users will partake responsibly, using the substance similarly to how many Americans use caffeine. Whether you want to use Kratom to help enhance your focus in the morning before work or help you improve your focus, it is unlikely to create a potential for abuse.

Photo by [Laryssa Suaid](#) from [Pexels](#)

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