

Kratom: Know the Risks

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BLUF

This fact sheet is designed to educate Navy commands and personnel about Kratom, a prohibited substance under DoD policy, and the risks it poses to health, mission readiness, and careers. Command involvement in raising awareness ensures Sailors understand the dangers, legal consequences, and broader impacts of Kratom use, fostering a more informed, resilient, and mission-ready force.

What is Kratom?

Kratom is a plant-based substance ingested as powders, capsules, teas, or edibles and marketed as a 'natural remedy' for pain or anxiety.

- Primary active compounds in Kratom are mitragynine (the dominant compound) and 7-hydroxymitragynine.
- Statistical trends indicate that **43.25%** of Kratom users fall between the ages of 16-25, with the majority of recent users being over 26 years old.
- 2.1 million Americans aged 12 and above reported using Kratom in 2020.

Kratom is estimated to be **13-times** more potent than morphine.

KEY POINTS

- **Side Effects:** Anxiety, psychosis, or mental health deterioration, liver damage, organ failure, exhaustion, addiction, aggression, fatigue and others.
- **Legality:** Prohibited. Listed on the [DoD Dietary Supplement Ingredient List](#).
- **FDA & CDC Reports:** 91 deaths were linked to Kratom between 2016 and 2017; 7 involved only Kratom with no other substance detected.

IMPACT ON MISSION READINESS

- Impairs cognitive and physical function, hurting decision-making, reaction time, and situational awareness.
- Jeopardizes mission readiness by impairing Sailors' performance, straining teammates, disrupting unit cohesion, and endangering operational success.
- Potential for severe disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).



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Prohibited Substance Alert: What Every Sailor Should Know About Kratom

Kratom remains widely accessible and is often sold near military bases. Retailers target service members with products that emphasize stress relief or energy enhancement.

- Legal in most states with military installations (e.g., VA, CA, FL), but specific local bans exist.
- Commonly available in smoke shops, vape shops, gas stations, and online platforms.

Takeaway: Just because it's available doesn't make it safe—or allowed.

Stay Informed. Stay Mission-Ready.

- Kratom poses unacceptable risks to your health, readiness, and career.
- Protect yourself and your shipmates: Avoid all substances on the DoD Prohibited List.
- Visit Operation Supplement Safety for more information at: OPSS.org

U.S. FDA and CDC Reports:

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have reported dozens of deaths where Kratom was listed as a contributing factor.
- Most of these cases involved polysubstance use, meaning Kratom was used alongside other substances like opioids, alcohol, or prescription medications. This combination significantly increases the risk of overdose and death.
- However, there are also documented cases of deaths where Kratom was the only substance detected, suggesting that high doses or adulterated products can cause fatal outcomes.

Testing and Detection:

- Even though it is marketed as a “natural” or “safe” alternative, the unpredictable effects, unregulated products, and potential contaminants make Kratom particularly dangerous and unsuitable for anyone—especially Navy personnel who must always maintain maximum mission readiness and physical health.

Although standard military drug tests don't detect Kratom, specialized tests can be ordered if use is suspected.

Brought to You By: [Navy Substance Prevention and Deterrence Branch](#)

