



# Poison HOTLINE

1-800-222-1222

September 2020



## Did you know .....

This past week, IPCC team members attended the annual North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology (NACCT) conference held virtually. This conference offers unparalleled education and professional development opportunities for physicians, nurses and pharmacists from around the world who participate in the sharing of knowledge on a wide variety of tox-related topics and issues. The IPCC had three scientific abstracts accepted for presentation at the meeting. Although the value of face-to-face interaction will never go away, we were excited about what we learned from the original research papers, state-of-the-art symposia and recent advancements in toxicology to improve patient care and outcomes.

## Kratom

Kratom comes from a tropical evergreen tree, *Mitragyna speciosa*, which is native to Southeast Asia and in the coffee family. The leaves have been used as an herbal stimulant and pain reliever by farmers in Southeast Asia for centuries. Traditionally, the workers would chew on the leaves during their long workdays in the fields.

Kratom is currently legal in Iowa, and in all but six U.S. states. However, there are seven municipalities that have banned kratom within these "legal states." The municipalities are: San Diego, CA; Denver, CO; Alton, IL; Jerseyville, IL; Union Co., MS; Columbus, MS; and Sarasota, FL.

Different forms of kratom can be purchased on the internet and in smoke shops, and is available as an extract, capsules, pellets and gum. It can be chewed, smoked or taken in capsule form and is often brewed into tea.

Kratom has been used for pain management, to increase energy, prevent opioid withdrawal, and to treat anxiety and depression. Kratom's predominate effects will be opioid, stimulatory, or sedative depending on the dose. There are currently no FDA-approved uses for Kratom. Because the product is not regulated, there is potential for adulterants and the purity may be compromised. Also, there is abuse potential with Kratom, but because it does not typically produce an extreme euphoric feeling, the abuse potential is believed to be lower. Chronic users may develop withdrawal symptoms to include myalgia, insomnia, fatigue and chest discomfort.

Effects typically begin within 5-10 minutes of chewing leaves and last between 2-5 hours. Acute overdose is not frequently reported, but symptoms of acute toxicity include palpitations, nausea, abdominal pain and rarely seizures. If other symptoms or more severe symptoms occur, consider that the product could be contaminated or that other things were ingested. Call the poison center, 1-800-222-1222, for recommendations.

Treatment is symptomatic and supportive care. Monitor for CNS depression; give benzodiazepines as necessary for agitation or possible seizure activity. Intubate in cases of severe agitation, respiratory depression, coma or seizure activity. Kratom does not show up on a standard urine drugs of abuse screen.

Jenny Smith, RN, BSN, CSPI  
Certified Specialist in Poison Information

**POISON**  
**Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**

The logo for Poison Help, featuring the word "POISON" in a bold, sans-serif font above the word "Help" in a larger, bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the word "Help" is a red pill bottle with a white skull and crossbones symbol on it. Below the word "Help" is the phone number "1-800-222-1222".

Hotline Editor: Edward Bottei, MD

Post and share this edition of **Poison Hotline** with your colleagues. Send comments or questions to Poison Hotline, 712-234-8775 (fax) or [Tammy.Noble@UnityPoint.org](mailto:Tammy.Noble@UnityPoint.org). To subscribe or unsubscribe from this distribution list, contact the IPCC education office at 712-279-3717. Read past issues of **Poison Hotline** at [www.iowapoisson.org](http://www.iowapoisson.org).