

Kratom

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Issue

What states have banned the substance “kratom”? Have there been any legislative proposals in Connecticut to ban its sale? Are there any documented overdoses or deaths in Connecticut due to kratom?

Summary

According to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\)](#), kratom is derived from a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia. The tree’s leaves contain two compounds (mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine) that can have psychotropic effects. When taken in small doses, users report feeling increased energy and alertness. In larger doses, users report experiencing sedation, pleasure, and decreased pain, similar to opiates. Users have also reported side effects from kratom use ranging from nausea and constipation to seizures, hallucinations, and psychotic symptoms.

We were unable to obtain data on kratom deaths in Connecticut, but in April 2019, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [reported](#) that kratom was determined to be a cause of death in at least 91 drug overdose deaths from July 2016 to December 2017. (For most of these deaths, fentanyl or other opiates were also detected in the post-mortem analyses.)

Kratom is not currently illegal under federal law, though the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) considered a ban in 2016 and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has warned consumers against its use.

Kratom is currently banned in six states: Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin. We found no legislative proposals in Connecticut to ban kratom or its active compounds.

Federal Agency Action Regarding Kratom

In 2016, the DEA [announced](#) its intent to add mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine to the list of Schedule I drugs under the federal Controlled Substances Act. (Schedule I drugs have a high potential for abuse and no currently accepted medical use.) According to the [New York Times](#), this announcement resulted in a “furious backlash” from users as well as certain members of Congress. The DEA did not go through with its plan to classify the substances as Schedule I, despite a subsequent [request](#) by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in 2017 to do so.

In November 2017, the FDA issued a [public safety advisory](#) warning consumers not to use kratom because “it appears to have properties that expose users to the risks of addiction, abuse, and dependence.”

State Bans on Kratom

Kratom is currently banned in at least six states. It was banned in three of those states through legislation, and in the other three states, the respective health department banned kratom by adding mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine to its list of regulated or Schedule I controlled substances. The table below provides information about the states in which kratom is currently banned and whether the ban was implemented through legislation or agency action.

State Bans on Kratom

<i>State</i>	<i>Method of Ban (Year Enacted)</i>	<i>Citation</i>
Alabama	Legislation (2016)	SB 226 (2016) Ala. Code § 20-2-23
Arkansas	Department of Health listing (2016)	Department of Health Proposed Update to Controlled Substance List Ark. List of Controlled Substances
Indiana	Legislation (2014)	SB 305 (2014) Ind. Code §§ 35-31.5-2-321 , 35-48-2-4
Rhode Island	Department of Health listing (2017)	Department of Health Notice of Designation Rhode Island Controlled Substances Act

<i>State</i>	<i>Method of Ban (Year Enacted)</i>	<i>Citation</i>
Vermont	Department of Health listing (2012)	Vermont Regulated Drug List 18 Vermont Stat. § 4201 et seq.
Wisconsin	Legislation (2014)	SB 325 (2013-2014) Wis. Stat. § 961.14

Resources

CDC, "[Notes from the Field: Unintentional Drug Overdose Deaths with Kratom Detected – 27 States, July 2016–December 2017](#)," April 12, 2019

FDA, "[Public Health Focus: FDA and Kratom](#)," November 2017

DEA, "[Press Release: DEA Announces Intent to Schedule Kratom](#)," August 30, 2016

DHHS, [Letter to DEA](#), October 17, 2017

New York Times, "[Opioid Users Call Kratom a Godsend. The FDA Says It a Menace](#)." April 17, 2019

NIDA, "[Drug Facts: Kratom](#)," April 2019

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