

Law Enforcement Concerned About Potentially Addictive Drug Kratom



Law enforcement officials are concerned about a potentially addictive drug called kratom, which is sold as a tea in head shops, according to *USA Today*.

Young men are posting testimonials about the drug on YouTube, the article notes.

Kratom is a tropical tree found in Southeast Asia. Its leaves are sold in the United States as a pill or powder to stir into drinks, the article notes.

"Kratom has been described as producing both stimulant and sedative effects," the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) states on its website. "At low doses, it produces stimulant effects, with users reporting increased alertness, physical energy, talkativeness and sociable behavior. At high doses, opiate effects are produced, in addition to sedative and euphoric effects.

Effects occur within 5 to 10 minutes after ingestion and last for 2 to 5 hours. Acute side effects include nausea, itching, sweating, dry mouth, constipation, increased urination, and loss of appetite."

Some people who abuse prescription painkillers use kratom to alleviate the effects of opioid withdrawal.

Kratom can be addictive, according to the newspaper. The drug is not monitored by any national drug abuse surveys, so it is not known how many people use it. The drug is widely available on the Internet, according to the DEA. It is not approved for any medical purpose in the United States.