

Item #7(7)

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL
2:00 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING
OCTOBER 28, 2014**

**SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF
COMMISSIONER JACOBS**

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Prevalent in Southeast Asia for many centuries, Kratom has reached the United States, touting itself as an herb that can ease pain and instill euphoria legally for everyone.

Unfortunately, even the websites dedicated to spreading the word about Kratom are replete with warnings that indicate addiction is likely.

Kratom is a plant that grows mostly in Asia, although it has been known to be harvested in the United States by private individuals. For centuries, individuals in these countries have used the leaves in tea to mitigate pain and increase euphoria. The providers of Kratom insist that casual

infrequent use of the drug is no more damaging than caffeine. This can be dangerous for the mind of a young teen who might otherwise not consider taking drugs.

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Kratom Is Not Illegal

The Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Division (DEA) issued a special warning several years ago concerning the drug Kratom. The drug is currently illegal in parts of Southeast Asia, and Australia has listed Kratom as one of their most restricted substances. It is still legal to buy, sell, grow or obtain Kratom in the United States; however, the DEA has listed it on their watch list for potentially dangerous substances.

How Is It Ingested?

Kratom is available as a leaf or tea, as well as in powder form. Both varieties can be brewed in a tea or added to a milkshake-like drink and ingested orally. Teens may also make a cocktail using carbonated soda which has been advertised on some websites that sell the drug to the public.

One of the inherent dangers of a drug like this growing in popularity in the United States is that teens may think this is a more acceptable means to take this substance as an innocuous milkshake, as opposed to smoking, injecting or inhaling the substance. They do not comprehend that the manner of ingestion is not important and the effects can be the same.



It is possible that savvy drug users, including teens, are using Kratom in combination with other controlled substances and illicit drugs. The DEA issued a special memorandum indicating that they were placing several other items on the controlled substance abuse list because they were frequently being used with Kratom, indicating that the drug is growing in popularity.

The Effects on the User

Like many drugs, Kratom offers a euphoric feeling to the teen user. It is both a stimulant and a sedative, depending upon the amount used, and it also has analgesic properties. In small doses, it acts as a stimulant that can make the teen chatty, less shy and even overly sociable. Some users have said that this is more of an irritating effect than a pleasant one.

In order to obtain the more desired euphoric effects, larger doses must be taken. When this happens, the teen may feel drowsy and suffer similar effects to that of heroin, including hallucinations. The effects are significant enough that driving or operating machinery could cause serious bodily harm to the user or others.

These effects last as many as six hours before they metabolize, and can last longer with higher doses.

The Effects of an Addiction to Kratom

Addiction is a serious problem, regardless whether the substance one is addicted to is legal. In the case of Kratom, the effects of addiction are similar to that of heroin or other opiates, as defined by the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Illness) including:

- An inability to meet social and scholastic responsibilities**
- Continued use of a drug despite harmful consequences**
- Consistent cravings**
- Inability to stop using the drug during active use**

When a teen has become addicted to Kratom through the daily use of the drug, they will experience withdrawal symptoms if they cannot obtain it. The withdrawal symptoms for Kratom also mimic those of heroin or opiate addiction and include:

- Nausea and vomiting**
- Shaking, trembling**
- Fever and chills**
- Irritability and aggression**
- Pain in the bones and joints**

Kratom has been used for centuries in Southeast Asia as a substitute for opium because of the vast similarities.



Warning Signs of Use in Teens

Because Kratom is a legal substance in the United States, your teen may not take the same precautions to hide their use of the drug as they would for other substances. A teen may keep the powder or leaves in plain sight, in a jacket pocket or backpack, and simply call it tea or protein powder. (See Similar: Spice Addiction)

In the event the teen fears detection, however, and they do go to extreme lengths to hide it, watch for other signs of abuse and addiction. These include:

- Decrease in interest of subjects and activities that used to be important
- Falling grades and lack of achievement in academics
- New friends they are reluctant to bring home
- Breaking rules or other belligerent behavior
- Irritable or easy to anger
- Glassy or glazed eyes, frequent use of sunglasses even indoors
- Excessive malaise or exhaustion, lethargy

Treatment for Kratom-Addicted Teens

Kratom addiction can be as serious as other addictions to illicit and illegal narcotics.

If one makes the comparison to the legal consumption of alcohol leading to alcoholism, it is easy to understand the significance of Kratom addiction as it applies to teens.

The first step in the recovery process will be the detoxification of the teen. This process is similar to other withdrawal periods, even though the drug is new on the American market. Therefore, each withdrawal experience is somewhat unique until further studies can be conducted.

Once the poisons have been removed from their system, the teen will enter the treatment phase of their recovery. Treatment options include outpatient therapy, medical inpatient rehabilitation and aftercare services.

Special attention should be placed upon the needs of teen addicts. The mind of a teen addict works differently than that of an adult by virtue of the continuing development of cognitive function. Teens think and react differently to situations than adults do.

Because of these special needs, studies have shown that teen-specific recovery centers that offer academics in conjunction with drug recovery treatment are more effective than adult facilities that focus attention upon treatment alone. A teen residential facility is more likely to offer private tutors and small class sizes for academics than a medical facility or a residential facility that treats mostly adults.

Gender-Specific Treatment for Teens

Many times, at this age, the opposite gender may be a distraction and cause the teen to focus their attention somewhere other than on their recovery. Finally, having a mixed-gender recovery situation can cause an individual teen to retreat emotionally for fear of speaking their minds in front of the opposite gender.

Teens are often more susceptible to unwanted judgment from their peers, especially the opposite gender.

All these reasons indicate that separating boys and girls in a treatment setting can increase recovery potential. Since most teens who reside in a recovery center that specializes in teen care are under the age of 18, many facilities are gender-specific or offer separate programs for boys and girls.

Alternative Therapies

Because the addiction and withdrawal symptoms of Kratom are so similar to those of heroin and other opiates, the application of alternative and holistic therapies are often effective during the recovery process. Some of these alternative therapies include:



- Diet and nutrition to create wellness in the body
- Acupuncture or acupressure techniques to mitigate cravings
- Equine-assisted therapy to help the individual learn new ways to solve problems
- Exercise, such as yoga and martial arts, to increase natural endorphin release
- Meditation for clarity of thought

Get Your Teen Help Today

Kratom has become more and more popular in recent years, with many teens believing that it a harmless herb that cannot possibly lead to the same kinds of addictions as heroin or hydrocodone. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Ensuring that your teen receives the right kind of treatment is important as you help them enter a new, sober lifestyle that will lead them to a bright and enlightened future.

If you have any questions about teen addiction or the treatment process, give us a call at Newport Academy today.

Further Reading About Teen Kratom Addiction

Basics 101

Fighting Addiction Effectively

Inpatient vs. Outpatient Treatment

The Dangers of Use

What Parents Need to Know

Explore Newport Academy

Admissions

Admission Process
For Teens

For Parents
For Professionals

Our Treatment Program

Boys Residential Center
Sober High School Orange County
Intensive Family Program

Girls Residential Facility
Equine Assisted Therapy
Outpatient Services

Information

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Location

Opening in 2014

New York City
Fairfield County, CT
MO Valley, CA
Mountain View, CA
Evanitas, CA

About Newport Academy

Newport Academy is a comprehensive, integrated treatment program for teens suffering from mental health, behavioral health and substance abuse issues. We offer two gender-specific residential facilities, a private high school and an outpatient center for continued care. If you or your child needs help, please call us as soon as possible. We are *always* on call and willing to help if given the opportunity. Please call Newport Academy at 866.382.6651.

Questions? Give Us A Call 866-382-6651