

Kratom Use During Pregnancy

Clinical & Educational Information for Pregnant Patients

Key message: Kratom is **not recommended during pregnancy or breastfeeding**. Even though kratom is often described as “natural,” it can still pose risks to you and your baby.

What is kratom?

Kratom is an herbal product made from the leaves of a tree native to Southeast Asia. It is sold as capsules, powders, teas, or extracts and may be marketed for anxiety, pain, mood, energy, or sleep. Because kratom is sold as a supplement, it is **not regulated** for safety, purity, or dose.

Why is kratom a concern in pregnancy?

- There is **very limited research** on kratom use during pregnancy.
- There are **reported cases of newborn withdrawal** (neonatal abstinence syndrome) after prenatal kratom exposure.
- Kratom products vary widely in strength and may contain contaminants or other substances.
- Kratom can act on opioid receptors in the brain, which raises concern for dependence and withdrawal.

Possible effects on the baby

- Newborn withdrawal symptoms such as excessive crying, jitteriness, feeding difficulties, or sleep problems.
- Need for closer monitoring of the baby after birth if there was exposure during pregnancy.

Important reminder:

“Natural” does NOT mean harmless. Many natural or herbal products can cross the placenta and affect a developing baby. Because kratom has not been proven safe, avoiding it during pregnancy is the safest choice.

What if I have already used kratom?

You are not in trouble. Many people use kratom because it is marketed as natural or safer than medications. Do not stop suddenly without talking to your healthcare provider, especially if you were using kratom daily. Your care team can help you stop safely and treat symptoms like anxiety, pain, sleep problems, or cravings with safer options during pregnancy.

Breastfeeding

Kratom is not recommended while breastfeeding. There is concern about infant exposure through breast milk and possible sedation or withdrawal effects in babies.

Trusted medical guidance

- **U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA):** Advises consumers not to use kratom due to safety concerns.
- **InfantRisk Center:** Recommends avoiding kratom during pregnancy and breastfeeding due to limited safety data and risk of newborn withdrawal.

Need help stopping or have questions?

Talk to your OB, midwife, or mental health provider. If you need confidential support for substance use, the SAMHSA National Helpline is available 24/7 at **1 800 662 HELP (4357)**.