Panhandle Health District
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Public Health
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Panhandle Health District

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NEWS RELEASE

Health District Issues Kratom Advisory

Panhandle Health District – February 23, 2026

Panhandle Health District has issued a district-wide warning for kratom, a drug with addictive and overdose potential. Street names include, “Thang, Kakuam, Ketum, Krathom, Madat, Mambog, Thom, Krypton, Herbal Speedball and Gas Station Heroin.”

Kratom is derived from the leaves of an evergreen tree native to Southeast Asia. At low doses, kratom produces a mild stimulant effect, causing increased alertness and energy, while at higher doses it has sedative properties similar to opioids. According to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), kratom consumption can lead to addiction and there have been cases of psychosis resulting from kratom use.

The two most active components of kratom are the alkaloids mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH). Potency and content of kratom products vary widely, and products are currently unregulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Kratom leaves may be processed and concentrated through extraction and distillation methods and sold in the form of liquids, powders or pills over the counter at gas stations and convenience stores. These concentrated preparations may contain unsafe levels of the active alkaloids and may cause seizures, addiction, liver and kidney toxicity. Signs of overdose include nausea, vomiting, agitation and restlessness.

"Kratom, and in particular 7-OH, appears to be a growing problem in Northern Idaho and the rest of the nation,” said Panhandle Health District’s Medical Director, Gregory Pennock, MD. “Deaths associated with kratom use have occurred in Northern Idaho per my communications with the Kootenai County Coroner. The health district wants to increase local awareness of these potentially dangerous products for individuals, parents, educators, healthcare workers, government officials and retailers."

The Health District recommends:

1. Avoiding all kratom products, especially those containing 7-OH
2. Seeking medical advice for side effects, addiction or withdrawal symptoms

3. Reporting adverse reactions of kratom or 7-OH products to the FDA's MedWatch program and to the Panhandle Health District (208-415-5235).

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Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.