

DIPHENHYDRAMINE



IN RECENT YEARS, this drug has increased in popularity among many drug seekers. Diphenhydramine comes under many brand names, including Benadryl. You may also see this drug labeled

as a generic “sleep aid”. Diphenhydramine is a popular, easy-to-get, and many times, an inexpensive drug.

Diphenhydramine is a synthetic antihistamine. It is commonly used as an allergy medication, antihistamine, sleep aid, cold medication, nausea reducer, motion sickness and more. Diphenhydramine is a depressant and over-the-counter drug that comes in a capsule, tab, or liquid form.



OFFICER JERMAINE GALLOWAY

WHY SO POPULAR:

Over the last couple of years, I have received several questions about the street level drug abuse of Diphenhydramine / Benadryl in schools, and on our streets.

For instance, during a drug training in the northwest, I had a police officer highlight his observation of multiple boxes of Benadryl, at the scene of an impaired driving crash where various drug use, was suspected, including Kratom (see the Tall Cop Kratom handout).

KRATOM TRAINING BULLETIN

The popularity of the drug Kratom (aka Mitragyna Speciosa, the plant name) has continued to increase among all age groups. This bulletin will highlight the popularity of Kratom, where it can be purchased along with some of the other names that Kratom trends under.

COMMON KRATOM STRAIN NAMES (by name or few)

• Maeng Da • Borneo • Bali • Inda •

WHAT IS KRATOM? WHY SO POPULAR?

Kratom is a natural herb/plant, it is NOT a synthetic. Meaning Kratom is grown and not made in a lab. Kratom is not regulated in most states and it is not a scheduled drug federally. This basically means you can purchase it in most states at retail stores or you can order it online. Most states do not have an age restriction on Kratom and in states where Kratom is legal there are generally no quantity limits. Many schools districts do have policies that address various (legal) drugs and this could be a quality violation in some of those districts for youth to be in possession of Kratom.

BASIC STREET LEVEL INFO:

As highlighted in the photo to the left, Kratom will sometimes be marketed under different names or variations of those names. Basically, the different names are different strain types of Kratom. Also, packaging of Kratom can look vastly different due to the fact there is no standardization or consistency with the packaging.

KRATOM FORMS:

• Powder (generally added to tea, beverages, hot drink, shoppies, mouth spray and vape oil)

FOR MORE INFO:

• <https://www.dea.gov/factheets/kratom>

• <https://www.fda.gov/oc/2014/08/08-fda-issues-kratom>

WHY DO PEOPLE USE IT AND HOW DO PEOPLE USE IT?

This is a big question that really can't be completely answered in a simple training bulletin, but we will address a few of the topics. Kratom is a natural herbal painkiller. It is a drug that makes it easy for the US mostly from other countries, primarily Asia. Many will use it for its painkiller effects and other might use it as "addiction replacement". As for any drug use it is person-specific. When discussing drug seekers and Kratom some who use opioids will use Kratom in place of those drugs and others will use it to help with opioid withdrawal. Some might use Kratom in an attempt to avoid being detected on drug tests. Some youth (who might not fall under the above reasons) might purchase Kratom due to it being available in retail stores and not regulated in their state.

KRATOM FACTS:

- Not FDA Approved
- Some states have regulations on Kratom
- Can be found in some retail store or online
- Might be sold under other brand names (but generally will list Kratom name on the packaging)

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FOR MANY OF THOSE WHO TAKE Diphenhydramine for medical use, generally 1 tablet is 25 milligrams (but can sometimes be 50 milligrams). For those who are looking for a drug high, we are seeing dosing upwards of 500 milligrams, which can be fatal. During one recent class, a local health official shared that they had an individual who dosed Diphenhydramine around 1,100 milligrams and it ended up being fatal.

Along with using Diphenhydramine by itself in high doses, others will dangerously mix Diphenhydramine with alcohol, benzodiazepines or other depressants.



In schools, we have seen youth use “dryl” in high doses to try to reach a hallucination-like high. This can be achieved for some when used in very dangerous high doses...several hundred milligrams. In 2020, the FDA sent out a warning about the “Benadryl Challenge” where they highlighted the dangers of large doses of Benadryl:

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We are aware of news reports of teenagers ending up in emergency rooms or dying after participating in the “Benadryl Challenge” encouraged in videos posted on the social media application TikTok.

-SOURCE: FDA

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Diphenhydramine is that drug that might not stand out in plain sight. Like many of the OTC’s (over-the-counter drugs) it can be dangerous in high doses.



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