

BONNEVILLE COUNTY



CORONER'S OFFICE

OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE

Bonneville County Coroner Issues Urgent Public Warning: Dangers of Kratom Use Confirmed in Local Fatalities

IDAHO FALLS, ID – October 8, 2025 – The Bonneville County Coroner's Office is issuing a public health alert regarding the dangerous and potentially fatal consequences of using **Kratom** (also known as Thang, Krypton, Kakuam, Ketum, and Maeng Da leaf, among others). This warning comes in response to a concerning increase in deaths across our county directly linked to the herbal substance.

Kratom-Related Deaths Skyrocket in Bonneville County

In the last 18 months, the Bonneville County Coroner's Office has investigated six Kratom-related deaths. A staggering four of these fatalities were determined to be solely due to acute drug toxicity of mitragynine—the primary active compound in Kratom.

"This is a wake-up call for our community" said Bonneville County Coroner Shante Sanchez. "To put this into perspective, Kratom is now implicated in approximately 18% of the drug overdose fatalities in our county over the last year and a half. The highest concentration of mitragynine observed in one of these fatalities was 12,000 ng/mL which is the highest I have ever seen at nearly four times our national laboratory's range typically associated with overdose of this substance. In addition, all Kratom-related deaths occurred within a small age window with our youngest victim 19 years old and the oldest was only 42. These aren't isolated incidents. We are seeing a clear pattern, and my community needs to know."

What is Kratom and Why is it Dangerous?

Kratom is a herbal substance derived from the leaves of the *Mitragyna speciosa* tree, native to Southeast Asia. It is commonly consumed as a raw powder, in capsules, as a tea, or as a liquid extract.

Kratom's effects are complex and unpredictable, acting as both a stimulant at low doses (causing alertness, rapid heart rate, and increased energy) and an opioid-like depressant at higher doses (leading to confusion, relaxation, and pain relief). The substance's effect on an individual is highly variable, depending on the dose, concentration, method of ingestion, and the user's personal medical and drug-taking history.

While Kratom is often marketed as a natural alternative for pain relief or to manage opioid withdrawal, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved it for any medical use, and its safety and effectiveness are not clinically determined.

A Plea to the Public

The Bonneville County Coroner's Office urges all residents to discontinue the use of Kratom. Individuals using Kratom who are struggling with addiction or pain management should seek professional medical help immediately.

"The public needs to understand that 'natural' does not mean 'safe.' Kratom can be deadly," the Coroner Shante Sanchez concluded. "Our priority is providing the facts and ensuring community safety. Help us prevent further tragedies by sharing this vital information".