

# DEA halts move to ban controversial herbal kratom

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Kratom leaf

(HealthDay)—Bowing to public pressure, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has halted a move to ban a plant called kratom, which experts say could help battle the nation's opioid epidemic.

Kratom is a plant from southeast Asia that contains a number of substances that trigger effects similar to opiates when consumed. Some people claim that kratom helped them overcome opiate and [alcohol addiction](#) and to treat [chronic pain](#). In a preliminary document posted to the Federal Register Thursday, the DEA announced withdrawal of its notice of intent to ban kratom and said it needs to obtain more research, the *Washington Post* reported.

Researchers say kratom may help them develop nonaddictive alternatives to opioids, but that a DEA ban on kratom would hinder those efforts, the *Post* reported. A number of U.S. lawmakers also opposed the DEA's move to ban kratom.

The DEA will accept public comment on kratom until Dec. 1 of this year and asked the U.S. Food

and Drug Administration to expedite a "scientific and medical evaluation and scheduling recommendation" for the active chemical compounds in kratom, the *Post* reported. After the public comment period closes, the DEA could impose different levels of regulation on kratom or leave it unregulated.

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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