

I fell victim to Kratom 8 years ago. It was described to me as a “safe and healthy” alternative to alcohol. It was marketed as a “supplement”, similar to a vitamin that would give you energy and focus.

I was not told I would become dependent. I was not told it was a legal opioid (which I had never used in my life). It destroyed my life, my skin, my drive, my desire to do my favorite hobbies, and almost destroyed my marriage. It gave me nose bleeds, high blood pressure, heart palpitations, panic attacks, severe depression, and uncontrollable vomiting. When I would go a few hours without drinking it, the piercing stomach pains and body aches deterred me from staying off. After a few years my personality began to fade, I became a shell of a person, and all I could think about was having my next dose of kratom.

I had never withdrawn from anything in my life and withdrawing from kratom was one of the scariest, most agonizing times of my life. Some of my physical WD symptoms were severe body aches, the feeling of crawling in your own skin, restless legs, severe insomnia, cold sweats, diarrhea, headaches, lethargy, no desire to move or walk, and I can keep naming them. The physical lasted about 7 days. Once the physical subsided, the mental anguish began. My wife asked me to baker act her on day 10 and asked me to do a suicide pact. A woman who is a suicide advocate and has lost her uncle and two best friends to suicide. It was a very scary time, and I feared for the mental stability of myself and my wife. It was probably the most difficult 2 weeks of both of our lives. I was blessed to be able to work remotely for those two weeks and had it not been for that I probably would not have been able to get off. There was no way I could fathom being in my office with other people under those conditions. I even lost a few of my clients, but it totally was worth every moment.

My wife and I have been off for a little over 6 months and feel amazing! We are feeling like ourselves again, our drive came back, our motivation came back, the zest for life came back, the finances are better, and most importantly our marriage is amazing. We are part of a new organization called [kratomquitters.com](http://kratomquitters.com) where there are resources for people trying to get off kratom. We host meetings every night (all volunteers), provide different supplement options for the withdrawals coming off kratom, we have a 24/7 support chat, podcasts of people telling their stories on kratom and getting off. These meetings and the support chat really saved us through those first two weeks of withdrawals and helps us stay off kratom now by helping others who are in the early days, and the constant reminder of how those first two weeks felt in helping those newcomers who are struggling. When my wife and I joined the support chat just 6 months ago, there were 50 people. Now there are almost 300 people from all walks of life struggling to get off kratom. In the virtual meetings there were about 15-20 people a night, and now there are well over 40-50. We know people who were having seizures and have died from this substance, meanwhile it is being sold in its most potent form in every gas station and smoke shop in America. It will become the next epidemic if action is not taken now.

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