

The unfiltered, unregulated truth of kava root products (Broadcast)

INTRO:

MARKETED AS A NON-ALCOHOLIC OPTION FOR OLDER TEENS AND ADULTS... DRINKS AND SUPPLEMENTS WITH KAVA ROOT HAVE GAINED POPULARITY IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. KAVA IS NATIVE TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC – AND IS A MEMBER OF THE PEPPER FAMILY – TRADITIONALLY USED IN CEREMONIES... SOCIAL EVENTS... AND MEDICAL SITUATIONS.

TAKE VO

MANUFACTURERS SAY THE ITEMS WILL HELP CONSUMERS RELIEVE ANXIETY... DECREASE STRESS... BECOME RELAXED AND EVEN FIGHT ADDICTION. HOWEVER – THERE'S MAJOR CONCERN ABOUT THE NEGATIVE SIDE EFFECTS THESE PRODUCTS CAN HAVE.

THEY CAN BE BOUGHT AS DRINKS – LIKE THE FEEL FREE CLASSIC – OR IN PILL FORM WITH POWDER FROM THE KAVA PLANT INSIDE.

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SAYS KAVA'S ACTIVE INGREDIENT... KAVALACTONES... CONTAIN SEDATIVE AND PSYCHOACTIVE – OR MIND-ALTERING PROPERTIES.

ERICA DAWKINS – A CLINICAL DIETITIAN WITH OSF HEALTHCARE – DIVES INTO THE ADDITIONAL HEALTH CONCERNS THAT HAVE BEEN WIDELY REPORTED TO HAVE CONNECTION TO KAVA.

TAKE SOT | ERICA DAWKINS | CLINICAL DIETITIAN | OSF HEALTHCARE

"We're seeing nausea and vomiting, dizziness, gastrointestinal distress. Some people are having trouble with their vision," Dawkins says. "Because of all these kavalactones, or active ingredients, some of them tend to damage the liver. Because we're seeing some extra liver damage going on, if you're also taking other medicines, supplements, or drinking alcohol, which can also damage the liver, we're seeing an exacerbated effect of that, too."

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IN 2002 – THE F-D-A ISSUED A CONSUMER ADVISORY ABOUT DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS CONTAINING KAVA... SAYING THEY MIGHT BE ASSOCIATED WITH SEVERE LIVER INJURY. NEARLY 2 DECADES LATER – THE F-D-A RELEASED A MEMORANDUM CONCLUDING THERE'S ENOUGH DATA TO SUGGEST USING KAVA FOR RECREATIONAL OR RELAXATION PURPOSES IS NOT SAFE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.

THE U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY REPORTS THAT CHRONIC USE OF KAVA CAN CAUSE DRY SCALY SKIN OR YELLOW SKIN DISCOLORATION.