



It takes a community.  
[itacmw.com](http://itacmw.com)

# GAS STATION DRUGS

# What are Gas Station Drugs???



- Synthetic Drugs
- Sold online, in vape shops and convenience stores
- Not FDA regulated
- Mimic prescription or illegal drugs
- Marketed as “mood boosters” “natural” or “herbal” products
- Often combined with other substances to heighten effects (**potentiator**)
- Addictive and can cause severe withdrawal

It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# What does **Potentiator** mean?

Potentiators are substances that increase or “amplify” the effects of drugs or alcohol - often in unpredictable and dangerous ways. They may seem natural or harmless but combining them with other substances can lead to overdose, organ damage, or even death.

Potentiators alter how the body absorbs, breaks down, or responds to other substances. They are dangerous because:

- Potentiators can slow drug metabolism, leading to dangerously high levels of alcohol, opioids, or prescription drugs.
- They can intensify sedation, slow breathing, and impair coordination.
- Some cause liver stress or interact with medications for anxiety, pain, or depression.

It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# Gas Station Drugs by Name

**Kava**

**Kratom**

**Tianeptine**

**Phenibut**

**Phrenze**

**Akuamma**

It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# KAVA

- Plant-based substance from South Pacific roots
- Active compounds: kavalactones — act on the brain's calming receptors
- Sold as drinks, gummies, pills, powders, or raw root
- Mimics a depressant, producing relaxation and mild euphoria
- Can amplify the effects of alcohol, opioids, or sleep medications (potentiator)
- Linked to liver damage, dizziness, nausea, and skin yellowing with heavy use
- May cause dependence or withdrawal symptoms
- Not regulated by the FDA - product strength and purity vary widely



It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# KRATOM

- Plant from Southeast Asia; main compounds: mitragynine & 7-hydroxymitragynine
- Forms: leaves, powders, capsules, extracts, tinctures
- Effects: low doses → stimulant; high doses → opioid-like
- Acts on opioid and other brain receptors
- Marketed as herbal supplement, mood enhancer, or pain relief
- Can amplify effects of alcohol, opioids, or benzodiazepines
- Side effects: nausea, constipation, itching, sweating; can cause dependence & withdrawal
- Risk of toxicity or death, especially with other substances
- Banned in 6 states: AL, AR, IN, RI, VT, WI; not FDA-regulated



It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# TIANEPTINE

- Synthetic drug: low doses act as antidepressant, high doses opioid-like
- Sold as pills, powders, capsules, liquids; marketed as mood enhancer or supplement
- Street/brand names: Za Za, TD Red, Tia, Tianna, Neptune's
- Can amplify depressant effects (alcohol, opioids, benzos)
- Risks: addiction, tolerance, severe withdrawal (anxiety, insomnia, muscle aches)
- Side effects: respiratory depression, seizures, agitation, nausea, cardiac issues
- Often adulterated with other substances
- Legal status: Not FDA-approved; controlled in some states; other states considering bans
- Multiple FDA and law enforcement warnings



It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# PHENIBUT

- Synthetic GABA-B agonist; calming at low doses, sedating or dissociative at high doses
- Used for anxiety, insomnia, opioid withdrawal, and potentiating depressants
- Often sold as mood enhancer, smart drug, or supplement; associated with kratom and tianeptine
- Addictive; abrupt cessation can cause severe withdrawal (anxiety, tremors, seizures)
- Not FDA-regulated; product quality varies
- Overdose resembles opioids, but **Narcan does not reverse effects**



It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# PHRENZE

- Sold as a mood enhancer or relaxation supplement
- Contains Phenibut and Kava extract → opioid-like and sedative effects
- Low doses → calming; high doses → sedation, euphoria, dissociation
- Risks: addiction, withdrawal (anxiety, tremors, seizures), psychosis, liver damage
- Can potentiate depressants (alcohol, opioids); effects **cannot be reversed with Narcan**
- Not FDA-regulated; strength and purity vary



It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# AKUAMMA

- Seeds from *Picralima nitida*; contains opioid-like alkaloids
- Used for pain relief, sedation, anxiety, anti-inflammatory
- Can potentiate depressants (alcohol, opioids, benzos)
- Forms: crushed/chewed seeds, tea, powder, capsules
- Side effects: nausea, dizziness, constipation, drowsiness; potential addiction
- Not FDA-regulated; potency and safety vary



It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)



## Imodium/Loperamide

- Opioid drug; therapeutic dose  $\leq 16$  mg/day
- Recreational use:  $>70$  mg/day to produce euphoria or ease opioid withdrawal
- Limited psychoactive effects at normal doses due to poor absorption and CNS efflux
- Low cost and nonprescription status  $\rightarrow$  sometimes called “poor man’s methadone”

# Other Over the Counter Drugs

## Benadryl/Diphenhydramine

- Sedating antihistamine; sometimes misused in high doses (~500 mg) for hallucinations or sedation
- Can intensify effects of opioids, alcohol, and other depressants
- Used by some to manage anxiety or narcotic side effects (“narc itch”)
- High doses cause confusion, rapid heart rate, seizures, or overdose
- Not safe for recreational use — can be life-threatening



# DELTA 8 & DELTA 9

## Delta-8 THC

- Isomer of Delta-9; less potent (~50–75% strength)
- Produces mild euphoria, relaxation; sometimes less anxiety
- Often synthetically converted from CBD or Delta-9 THC → may contain residual chemicals
- Unregulated, adverse events reported
- Keep away from children and pets

## Delta-9 THC

- Primary psychoactive compound in cannabis
- Stronger effects: euphoria, sedation, impaired coordination
- Naturally occurs in marijuana and hemp; consumed via smoking, vaping, or edibles
- Legal status varies by state; federally illegal if derived from marijuana
- Keep away from children and pets

**Key takeaway:** Both are psychoactive and intoxicating; Delta-8 is milder but less regulated, making safety uncertain



It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# Be Observant: What to Look for in Local Gas Stations and Stores

“Gas station drugs” and other high-risk products are becoming more common in convenience stores, vape shops, and even small local markets. These items are often **marketed as harmless supplements, snacks, or energy products**, but may contain **psychoactive or addictive substances** that pose risks to youth and the community.

Community members can play an important role by being **aware and observant** when shopping.

It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# Be Observant: What to Look for in Local Gas Stations and Stores

- **What's being sold:** Are there products like vapes, Delta-8 THC, mood enhancers, or high-alcohol drinks available?
- **Where items are placed:** Are these products within easy reach, at eye level, or displayed near candy, snacks, or check-out counters?
- **Marketing tactics:** Do the packages look like children's snacks or candy (*Cannanimal Crackers, Dank Unions, Stoner Patch*)?
- **Deceptive branding:** Are products copying popular logos or packaging that might appeal to kids?
- **Who it targets:** Does the marketing seem youth-oriented or aimed at young adults?

It takes a community.  
itacemw.com

# Be Observant: What to Look for in Local Gas Stations and Stores

## Alcohol, Vapes, and Other Concerns

- Is alcohol in coolers next to water or soda?
- Is alcohol displayed near entrances, exits, or at the checkout?
- Are single units or high-alcohol / caffeinated beverages being sold?
- Are alcohol, vape, or tobacco products being sold close to candy or youth-oriented displays?

It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# Be Observant: What to Look for in Local Gas Stations and Stores

## Other Things to Keep in Mind

- Are there many outdoor signs advertising alcohol, tobacco, or vape products?
- Is the store located near a school, park, or daycare (within 1,000 feet)?
- Do they use age verification devices for alcohol or vape purchases?
- Are licenses or permits posted and current?

It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# Be Observant: What to Look for in Local Gas Stations and Stores

## Other Things to Keep in Mind

- Are there many outdoor signs advertising alcohol, tobacco, or vape products?
- Is the store located near a school, park, or daycare (within 1,000 feet)?
- Do they use age verification devices for alcohol or vape purchases?
- Are licenses or permits posted and current?

It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# What Parents & Community Members Can Do

## Talk to Youth Early and Often

- Have open, judgment-free conversations about substances — including new or misleading products found in gas stations or online.
- Encourage critical thinking: ask questions like “Why do you think this product looks like candy?” or “What might it really contain?”
- Help them understand that “legal” doesn’t always mean “safe.”

## Engage with Local Stores

- Support stores that clearly separate or restrict alcohol, vape, and drug-like products.
- Report concerns (such as deceptive packaging or underage access) to the store manager or local authorities.
- Ask businesses to keep adult products out of reach and away from candy or check-out areas.

## Report and Share Information

- If you see youth-targeted or deceptive packaging, report it to:
  - Local health department or coalition
  - State Liquor Authority or FDA consumer complaint line
- Share credible information on social media, at school meetings, or in community newsletters.

It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# Lead By Example & Stay Involved

- Model healthy coping strategies and safe choices at home — keep alcohol, medications, and vape products secured and out of reach.
- Show that it's okay to ask questions and seek help when something seems off.
- Stay connected by joining local prevention coalitions (like **ITAC**) or parent groups, attending community forums or “environmental scans,” and keeping informed about new and emerging substances like Delta-8, Tianeptine and Phenibut.



It takes a community.  
[itacemw.com](http://itacemw.com)

# Further Reading

DEA Drug Factsheets: <https://www.dea.gov/factsheets>

WNY United Against Drugs & Alcohol: Get Help Now: <https://www.wnyunited.org/get-help-now.html>

The Concerning Emergence of "Gas Station Heroin":  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/addiction-outlook/202506/the-concerning-emergence-of-gas-station-heroin>

What is Kratom: <https://www.upstate.edu/poison/pdf/kratom-info-sheet.pdf>

Is Ingesting Kratom Safe?: <https://www.upstate.edu/informed/2024/030124-eggleston-podcast.php>

Phenibut: The Hidden Threat in Plain Sight: <https://www.tallcopsaysstop.com/blog/phenibut-hidden-threat-plain-sight>

Old Product, New Buzz, Real Concerns: <https://www.tallcopsaysstop.com/blog/old-product-new-buzz-real-concerns>

It takes a community.  
itacemw.com