

Frequently Asked Questions about 'Awa Consumption

1. *Q: What was 'awa traditionally used for?*

Traditionally, 'awa was consumed for medicinal & ceremonial purposes.

Medicinal purposes include:

- Induce sleep in case of a fever or sleeplessness (hia'ā)
- As a tonic (lā'au ho'oikaika) to completely relaxed and fell asleep.
- Severe headaches;
- Sore muscles
- As a cleans
- Lung infections
- Difficulty in passing urine, etc.

Ceremonial purposes

- Invite, connect, or be more in tune w/kūpuna (who have passed) to provide guidance, wisdom, etc.
- Settle/relax participants

2. *Q: Why is 'awa being introduced during middle school age?*

- The importance of partaking of 'awa is to revitalize, perpetuate, and bring normalcy to native Hawaiian cultural practices amongst Hawaiians in modern society. Having students taste & experience the 'awa, and connect to kūpuna in a safe and educational venue.
- Our team, including our Po'o Kula Hope, Mr. DeSa, believe our 8th grade haumāna to be at an age mature enough to learn about 'awa, understand the purpose and intent of the 'awa ceremony, while educating and clearing up any misconceptions, and prevent misuse or overindulgence of the sacred drink.
- Sources tell us that traditionally, the drinking of 'awa was included in every important ceremony. As the traditional beverage, it carries with it historical associations of drinking as a way of expressing or promoting peaceful relationships and connections amongst people in casual or ritual settings
- 'Awa was accompanied with rituals, and prayers to Akua, deities, kūpuna, and/or 'aumākua for supplication, inspiration and guidance, for skill in hula, for health, for a successful battle, for a safe voyage, etc.

3. *How much 'awa will my keiki be consuming?*

- a. Our huaka'i will provide the opportunity for your keiki to participate in a traditional 'awa ceremony. During the 'awa ceremony, one single serving of 'awa will be poured into their own individual 'apu in the approximate amount of 6 ounces or less.*

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- b. *If a student declines the 'awa, just a few drops will poured for him/her to participate by offering it to their kūpuna by dabbing with a finger and flicking over the shoulder, then they can optionally dab the remaining 'awa and place it on the tongue.*

4. **What effects will the 'awa have on my child?**

It is likely that the one(1) 'apu 'awa will have no noticeable effects on any student except that they likely have a more restful sleep. If a student does feel any of the physical effects of 'awa it would include tingling or numbness of the tongue and/or mouth area.

5. **Can my son/daughter get intoxicated by drinking 'awa?**

- Effects of 'awa vary according to the amount taken. In moderation, 'awa relaxes the nerves and induces refreshing rest; taken often and in large quantities, sources say skin may become scaly, possibility of ulcers, blood-shot eyes and suppurated, reduced control of the nerves of the arms and legs, difficulty walking
- However, unlike alcohol, the mind remains clear until sleep comes and emotions are unaffected.

*He kanaka ka mea inu 'awa;
He pua'a laho ka mea inu kuaipa*

[The man who drinks 'awa is still a man
But the man who drinks liquors becomes a beast.]

6. **Are there any legal issues associated with drinking 'awa for my child?**

Kamehameha Schools legal team found nothing wrong with the consumption of a moderate amount of 'awa for the purpose of educating and grounding our haumāna in Hawaiian culture.

7. **What will be served with the 'awa?**

Often times, during an 'awa ceremony, students will have an 'apu wai (water) and pūpū to cleans the pallet. Some pūpū might include: Kalo, 'Uala (sweet potato), 'Ulu (bread fruit), Mai'a (banana), Limu Kala (seaweed).

References:

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