

What is Ketamine?

Ketamine (ketamine hydrochloride) is a dissociative general anaesthetic. Doctors and vets use this drug because it produces pain relief and amnesia. It is considered a safer alternative to general anaesthetic for some people (e.g. older people and children) as it does not slow down a person's breathing or heart rate.

Ketamine produces a feeling of detachment from one's body and the external world. It does this by reducing or blocking signals to the conscious mind from other parts of the brain, such as the senses - sight, sound, taste, touch and smell.

The short-term effects of ketamine include a sense of euphoria and well-being, hallucinations, a sense of floating, drowsiness, amnesia, slurred speech, nausea, vomiting and dissociation.

The Law

Ketamine is controlled as a Class B Drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. (It was reclassified from Class C in June 2014). Penalties for possession are up to five years in prison and/or an unlimited fine. Supply holds penalties of up to 14 years in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

Catch22 Surrey Young People's Substance Misuse Service

Catch22 Surrey Young People's Substance Misuse service is a service for young people aged between 11 and 25.

We offer free confidential advice and support.

If you would like to know more about the risks and effects of alcohol or drugs, and/or would like to access support - we will listen and work with you with to achieve the changes you would like to make.

Please contact

24/7 helpline: 08006226662

T: 01372 832905

Text: 07595088388

Email: ypsm@catch-22.org.uk

Website: <https://www.catch-22.org.uk/services/surrey-young-peoples-substance-misuse-service/>

Instagram: [sypsms_c22](https://www.instagram.com/sypsms_c22)

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01372 832905

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KETAMINE

AKA: VitaminK' (not to be mistaken for the actual vitamin found in vegetables), 'Special K', 'Super K', 'K', 'Green', 'Donkey Dust', 'Ket' or 'Wonk'

UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS

There is no safe level of drug use. It is important to be careful when taking any type of drug.



10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. When used as a medicine, ketamine looks like a clear liquid. When ketamine is used recreationally it can look like a grainy brown or white powder and it can also come in a tablet form.
2. Ketamine is likely to be cut with other substances to increase the sellers profits; this can increase the risk of negative side effects and overdose. Sugars (e.g. lactose), talcum powder, paracetamol, and caffeine are just a few of the substances commonly found in the final product.
3. A person may feel the effects of ketamine within 5-10 minutes if the drug is snorted. When ketamine is taken orally, it can take between 20 minutes to an hour to feel the full effects. It is important not to top up a dose if the substance is taking a long time to kick in as this can increase the risk of overdose. Once the drug has fully entered the body, people may experience the effects from thirty minutes up to an hour.
4. When people use ketamine, they may enter an 'emergent state' which starts with feelings of being unable to move, followed by the feeling of disconnection from physical sensations and sometimes hallucinations.
5. Some people may experience a "K-hole" which is a trip-like experience that varies from person to person. During a "K-hole" they may feel like their mind and body has separated which can be unpleasant and scary.
6. The risk of overdose with ketamine is higher if people use other depressant drugs at the same time. Depressant drugs include: alcohol, benzodiazepines, pain killers or heroin.

7. Ketamine reduces the brain's ability to feel pain, which can increase the risk of injury when under the influence. An injury could result in hospital admission or in severe cases could be fatal.
8. Ketamine can increase heart rate and blood pressure, which can be dangerous for people with pre-existing problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease and people at risk of a stroke.
9. Ketamine can cause mental health issues, such as psychotic symptoms (delusions, hallucinations, disturbing thoughts), anxiety, panic attacks and paranoia. It can also make other pre-existing mental health conditions worse.
10. Long term use of ketamine can result in physical harm such as painful urination, stomach cramps, urinary urgency, incontinence, organ damage including bladder, brain and kidney's. It can also have lasting effects on mental health, memory, attention and decision making.



Symptoms of withdrawals Include:

Ketamine withdrawal is mainly psychological in nature but you may also experience some physical symptoms. Ketamine withdrawal is not known to be fatal.

Psychological and physical symptoms include: Depression, anxiety, cravings, irritability, aggression, panic attacks, paranoia, psychosis, insomnia, self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

Fast heart rate, urinary pain, impaired vision, stomach cramps, sweating, problems with co-ordination and movement, and temporary hearing loss.

Symptoms of ketamine overdose include: Loss of consciousness, extremely slow heart rate, low blood pressure, seizure, coma and can be fatal.

If using ketamine and you begin to feel unwell, or notice someone is unwell whilst using, seek immediate medical attention. Go straight to A&E or for urgent medical advice contact 111 or 999 in an emergency.