

Ketamine

Ways to reduce harms



Firstly a few things to know about ketamine (also known as K, Ket, Ketters, or Special K)

- Ketamine is an anaesthetic drug primarily used in medicine and veterinary practice for sedation and pain relief.
- Ketamine can cause you to feel happy, relaxed, dizzy, and a bit sleepy. It also has 'dissociative' effects whereby you feel disconnected from your body and environment and time feels distorted.
- At higher doses you may experience hallucinations (hearing and seeing things that aren't there) or an intense out-of-body experience known as a 'K-hole'.
- Accidents and injuries are one of the biggest risks of ketamine due to its effects on balance and coordination. The chances of being assaulted also increase if you are in a K-hole.
- The effects of ketamine generally last around an hour, however your coordination and senses may continue to be affected for up to 12 hours.
- There are different forms of ketamine. Some take longer to come on and their effects can also last much longer. This is important to know when trying a new batch.
- Mixing ketamine with other substances adds additional risks, especially alcohol and other depressants, such as opioids, benzodiazepines (e.g. Valium®) or GHB as these greatly increase your risk of vomiting, black-outs, and overdose.
- Continued ketamine use can result in flashbacks, difficulty thinking clearly, memory issues, mood swings, and paranoia.
- Tolerance builds extremely quickly with regular ketamine use whereby you need more of the drug to feel the same effects. This can lead to withdrawals if you suddenly stop.
- **Long term use also causes serious bladder and urinary problems including a frequent urge to urinate, strong pain, and blood in your pee. It can also cause serious kidney problems.**

It's important to know that there is no safe level of non-medical ketamine use.

Would you try any of these strategies below? (or maybe you do them already?)	Yes	Maybe	No
Testing your ketamine at a drug checking service or with a home testing kit first?			
Waiting 90 minutes after eating before using ketamine to reduce the risk of vomiting?			
Starting with a small dose and waiting 30 minutes to check the strength and effect?			
Using a dosing spoon or a 'bump bullet' to measure a small dose more accurately?			
Setting a timer of when you take a dose - and/or setting an alarm for a future dose - to reduce the risk of overdose?			
Not mixing with alcohol as it greatly increases the risk of accidents, vomiting, and passing out?			
Also not mixing with other depressants such as benzodiazepines, opioids, or GHB?			
Only using in safe environments (e.g. away from traffic, waterways, or busy areas)?			
If snorting - grinding your ketamine very finely?			
Waiting at least 1 hour before redosing?			
Telling your friends or a trusted person when and how much ketamine you are using?			
Planning to use where there is someone trusted to look after you if needed?			
Marking your ketamine clearly so that it is not confused with cocaine or other powdered substances?			
Keeping your ketamine out of reach of children and pets?			
If you are going out, having a designated driver?			
Avoiding regular use - especially daily use - to avoid becoming dependent?			
Seeing your GP if you experience changes in how often you urinate, experience bladder pain, or notice blood in your pee?			



Ketamine and driving

Ketamine can significantly impact your ability to drive safely for up to 24 hours and it is illegal to drive/cycle under the influence of ketamine. It's also difficult to know how much your driving skills have been affected or how long it remains in your system. Fatigue, hangovers, or come downs from drugs can also affect your driving skills.



Do you use regular medications?

Ketamine can have serious interactions with some medications (especially some antidepressant and pain medications) and may affect how others work. Check the medicine packet and/or ask your doctor or pharmacist.



Accidents

Try to prevent accidents or bad experiences from occurring. As ketamine affects your coordination and movement stay seated when dosing and avoid using in high-risk areas (e.g. around traffic, waterways, heavy machinery) or places where an overdose or accident may go unnoticed.



Practice safe sex

Carry and use condoms and access regular STI testing, especially whenever you start having sex with a new partner.

Withdrawals

Ketamine dependence can develop quite quickly in people who use it regularly. There is currently no approved treatment for the management of ketamine withdrawal. Withdrawal is different for everyone but some people report shaking, anxiety, and sweats when they stop using ketamine.

If you do experience any problems when you stop or reduce your use of ketamine, you should talk to your doctor.

Are you pregnant, breastfeeding or parenting?

Using any substance when planning a pregnancy, pregnant, or while breastfeeding can affect your baby's body and brain development. Talk to a medical professional for advice, especially if considering detoxing whilst pregnant.

Substance use can affect your children and others around you. Ensure your children remain safe and supervised at all times.

Note: Sleeping with a child in the same bed while under the influence of ketamine can be particularly dangerous.

Responding to a ketamine overdose

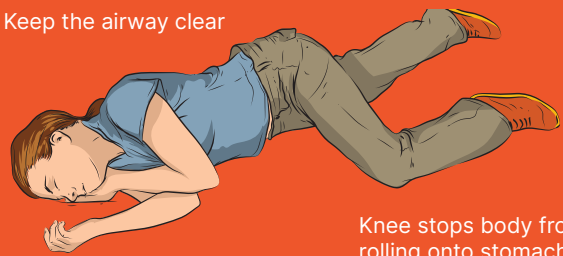
Signs of a ketamine overdose include:

- Inability to move and/or rigid muscles
- Slow heartbeat, chest pain
- Overheating (hyperthermia)
- Blurred vision
- Tremors
- Confusion and severe agitation
- Seizures
- Coma / death

If this occurs, seek assistance by calling triple zero (000) and ask for 'AMBULANCE'. If someone is unconscious and breathing, turn them on their side in the recovery position. If they are not breathing, perform CPR if you are able to and wait with them until help arrives. Don't confuse sleep with loss of consciousness. If someone cannot be woken up, it is likely they are unconscious.

Unfortunately, there's no way to reverse a ketamine overdose. Medical intervention is required to manage the overdose effects.

Keep the airway clear



Knee stops body from rolling onto stomach

Hand supports head

What would be signs that your ketamine use is becoming more of a problem? When would you know it's time to take a break and/or seek help?

