



For further information:

**Drugaid**

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0870 numbers are more expensive from a mobile. 0870 numbers are cheaper from a landline.

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**Ketamine**

# Ketamine

*k, Special K, Vitamin K, Kit Kat, Super K, Green, Ket*

## What does Ketamine look like?



## What is Ketamine?

Ketamine is an analgesic so it has very strong pain killing effects and an anaesthetic drug legally produced for use in human and animal medicine.

Ketamine can come in powder form, crystals, liquid or pills. Legally produced ketamine comes in a liquid form. It can be taken intravenously or intramuscularly, swallowed, snorted or "up the bum".

## What will it do to me?

Ketamine can cause visual and auditory hallucinations. It depresses the body's nervous system, and causes people to be unable to feel their body.

The most common feeling associated with ketamine is that people experience an 'out of body experience'. This can feel like a floating feeling as if the mind and body have separated. Ketamine is an unusual drug and people have found themselves freaked out, hurt, robbed or groped – because they weren't aware of Ketamine's 'disassociative' aspects.

Although Ketamine only lasts between 20-40 minutes, it disassociates the mind from the body, so you won't be able to feel or control your body with any certainty. It may be impossible to walk, run, or even move at all – all of which can be dangerous if you suddenly find yourself in a dodgy situation. People may also experience blurred vision.

Side Effects include: dripping nose, stomach cramps especially if swallowed, vomiting, bad taste in the mouth and risky sexual practice.

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## When does it become a problem?

- Needing to use higher and higher doses, using more frequently than intended and becoming psychologically dependent.
- When you end up in risky situations and you are unable to move properly or think straight. You could be vulnerable to being robbed or attacked.
- If you experience severe abdominal pain (k cramps).
- If you start to experience panic attacks or anxiety that last beyond the effect of the drug.
- There have been reports in medical literature that ketamine is linked with serious bladder issues and urinary related problems. If you experience stinging or burning when passing urine, (symptoms similar to cystitis but that won't respond to normal cystitis treatments) seek medical advice immediately as this can lead to permanent harm.
- Feeling depressed and anxious when stopping ketamine use or reducing the amount you use.
- There is a risk of death if taken in very high doses or with depressant drugs like alcohol or benzo's, as the anaesthetic effect can result in unconsciousness and inhalation of vomit.
- As people don't feel any pain when using ketamine, people can seriously injure themselves and be unaware of the damage they have done.

## Staying safer

- Stick to small doses. It will only last for 30 minutes or so but you are much safer on a small dose than if you take a large amount and you are inexperienced.
- If you take ketamine when you are out and about you are risking losing coordination very suddenly – and possibly dangerously. Much better to take it in a warm safe and cosy place with people you trust. You may be vulnerable and forgetful as well.

- Carefully pick the music as this will be with you throughout your K experience. You may not be able to move to change the CD.
- Avoid swallowing ketamine – there is a strong belief among users that ketamine in the stomach makes cramps worse. Seek medical advice and mention your ketamine use to the doctor. If you sit in the bath to soothe the pain there is a risk of unconsciousness and drowning.
- If you experience ongoing panic and anxiety attacks get support from Drugaid.
- If you experience pain in your bladder seek medical help, tell your GP that that you use ketamine and ask for a referral to an urologist. Try to stop or reduce your use if these symptoms start.
- Try to keep your use as low as possible. Give yourself breaks from using if you can.
- If you feel depressed and anxious when stopping ketamine use or reducing the amount you use, prepare yourself and get some professional help to do this. Gradual reduction may help to manage these symptoms. Try to distract yourself with purposeful and enjoyable activities.
- Injecting ketamine brings the additional risk of damaging your veins, skin infections and contracting blood borne viruses such as Hepatitis or HIV. Get safer injecting advice from Drugaid or your nearest needle exchange.

## The Law

Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 Ketamine is a Class C drug, which means it is illegal to possess.

### Penalties

- Possession:** up to 2 years in prison or a fine.  
**Supply:** up to 14 years in prison and/or a fine.