

FACTS ABOUT KETAMINE

WHAT IS KETAMINE?

Also known as K, super K, special K, lady K, vitamin K, cat tranquiliser, ket, ketaset, ketalar, kitkat, horse trunk, horse tranquiliser.

Ketamine is a dissociative drug. It is commonly used by vets to sedate animals. Doctors also use it as an anaesthetic or can prescribe it for the treatment of depression. Some people use ketamine illegally for recreational purposes. The drug is manufactured as a liquid which is then evaporated to form a white or light brown powder.

Ketamine can be snorted using a small glass nasal inhaler called a "bumper" or it can be dissolved in liquids, sprinkled on other drugs or taken as a tablet. In different forms, it can be swallowed, smoked or injected. Ketamine is sometimes used along with other drugs such as ecstasy, cocaine, cannabis or tobacco. During production, it can be mixed with other substances which may be harmful, making it hard to know what you are taking.

EFFECTS OF KETAMINE

Effects depend on the person (age, weight, size, health and tolerance), as well as the strength, the amount taken, and if it is used with other drugs, including alcohol. When injected, the effects are felt within 1 minute, when snorted (5 to 15 minutes), when swallowed (up to 30 minutes). As it wears off, you may experience "comedown" effects, which can last 2 to 3 days.

Short-term effects, both desired and undesired, may include...

- euphoria, relaxed, sense of wellbeing and of floating
- drowsiness, dissociation, slurred speech, blurred vision, amnesia
- anxiety, paranoia, panic, terror, violence
- increased sex drive, heart rate and blood pressure
- nausea and vomiting
- delusions and hallucinations – see and hear things that aren't there, altered reality
- nosebleeds and nasal passage damage (from snorting)
- tetanus, infection, vein damage, Hepatitis B or C, HIV, AIDS (from injecting or sharing needles).

Long-term effects may include...

- headaches and stomach pain
- flashbacks, mood swings, depression and psychosis
- poor memory, confusion, difficulty concentrating or sleeping
- ulceration of the bladder or kidney damage
- ketamine dependence.

OVERDOSE

Effects from overdosing: can't move, dizziness, stomach pain, high blood pressure, increased heart rate, convulsions, unconsciousness, death.

If a person is experiencing an overdose or is unresponsive call 000 for an ambulance. If unconscious, put them in the recovery position. If not breathing, start CPR. Paramedics won't involve police unless the person is a danger to themselves or others.

How long does ketamine stay in your system?

Depends on use and person. Generally, effects last around 1 hour, though can be felt up to 24 hours. It can be detected in saliva up to 2 days, in blood up to 3 days, in urine 3 days or up to 2 weeks and in hair up to 3 months.

TIPS FOR REDUCING RISK

There is no safe way to use ketamine. There will always be a health risk. The only way to be safe is not to use. If you choose to use, the following will help reduce risk:

Before: take a friend and tell them what you plan on using, plan how to get home (to avoid driving under the influence), use new or clean equipment. Injecting is not recommended, though if choosing to inject, get your own clean, sharp syringe and find a clean location.

During: go slow, start with a low dose then wait to see effects before having a bit more, know and keep to your limits. Safely dispose of syringes.

Avoid: using ketamine with other drugs, including alcohol, using too much or too often, needle or equipment sharing. While using don't be alone, don't drive or do risky activities or be responsible for the care of others.

IS KETAMINE USE BECOMING A PROBLEM?

It may be a problem if you agree with any of these statements:

- I struggle to limit or reduce the amount of ketamine I'm using
- I spend a lot of time using ketamine or affected by it
- I often feel strong urges to use ketamine
- I'm unable to perform tasks at work, school or home due to ketamine use
- I have developed a tolerance to ketamine, so I need to have more to feel effects
- I have withdrawal symptoms – shaking, sweats, tired, anxious, depressed and sense of rapid heartbeat.

TIPS FOR PROBLEMATIC KETAMINE USE

- seek support from a health professional, as well as from family and friends
- avoid people, places, objects, feelings or situations associated with taking inhalants
- start doing activities you enjoy that don't involve taking ketamine
- look after yourself – get enough sleep, follow a healthy diet, adopt a balanced lifestyle
- set some personal goals.

KETAMINE AND THE LAW

In Australia, it is illegal to use or possess ketamine without a prescription from a doctor, or to sell or give ketamine to someone else for recreational use. It is also illegal to possess any implement for using ketamine. In Queensland, it is illegal to possess needles or syringes if they are not disposed of safely and therefore pose a risk to others.

FOR SUPPORT – CALL DRUG ARM

CALL DRUG ARM CENTRAL INTAKE ON 07 3620 8880 DURING BUSINESS HOURS TO ACCESS FREE SUPPORT OR EMAIL INTAKE@DRUGARM.COM.AU. FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, CALL 1300 656 800 OR EMAIL INFO@DRUGARM.COM.AU.

FOR 24/7 SUPPORT CALL:

ALCOHOL & DRUG INFORMATION SERVICE:
1800 177 833 (QLD) AND 1800 250 015 (NATIONAL).