

# KETAMINE

## Information Sheet

### What is Ketamine?

**Ketamine is Class B drug also known as 'Special K', Kenny, Ket, Vitamin K, Donkey Dust and Wobble**

Ketamine is a dissociative anaesthetic that has hallucinogenic effects. It distorts perceptions of sight and sound and makes the user feel disconnected and sedated. Use can lead to not being able to move, pain relief, and amnesia (loss of memory).

In prescribed, controlled doses, it is a licensed anaesthetic drug that can be used for veterinary and human medicine.

The street form of Ketamine usually comes as white crystals or powder - it can also be in a liquid or tablet form – Ket is sometimes mixed with other drugs, for example **pink cocaine** or **Tuci** is commonly a mix of MDMA, Ket and caffeine

### How can Ketamine make someone feel?

Depending on the dose and strength and purity of the drug, Ketamine can:

- In small amounts act as a stimulant – boosting energy levels and giving a high.
- Larger amounts can make someone feel like they're in a dream, 'floating' and the mind and body are detached or a 'k hole'.
- It can also make someone feel confused and sick
- As a sedative, someone may be unable to move
- Use can cause hallucinations

- It speeds up heart rate and increases blood pressure.

When snorted effects begin within around 15 mins and will last for around 40 minutes. If swallowed the effects begin around 15 to 30 mins and can last for up to 3 hours.

### Ketamine and Risks

Ketamine is a very strong drug that can be dangerous. It can even be deadly, especially if it's mixed with other drugs or alcohol. The effects of not being able to move or react increases a user's vulnerability to others.

### Mental health risks

The longer term effects of ketamine use can include flashbacks, memory loss and problems with concentration.

Regular use can cause depression and psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations. If someone already struggles with poor mental health, ketamine can make things worse.



## Physical Health Problems

**Bladder damage:** Ketamine bladder syndrome (KBS) occurs when serious and sometimes irreversible damage to the urinary tract occurs. Symptoms can include needing to pee all the time, pain when peeing, and blood in pee. In heavy users, KBS can lead to incontinence, leaks and the need for bladder replacement.

**Stomach pain:** Long-term users often get bad stomach cramps, called “K-cramps.” K-cramps refer to abdominal pain that people can experience when their urinary tract (bladder, kidneys and urethra) become damaged due to ketamine use and can be extremely painful. Stopping use of ketamine and seeking medical pain relief is the only way to prevent K-cramps.

**Liver damage:** Using a lot of ketamine over time can harm the liver, which is the organ that cleans blood and removes toxins.

## Staying Safe – Reducing the Risks

The best way of course is to avoid using drugs and to have a strategy to manage situations where someone may feel pressured to take drugs.

If someone uses ketamine the following advice may help reduce short and long term risks to their physical and mental health: Being mindful of place - using it somewhere safe with a friend so that they can keep an eye on each other.

Chopping up the crystals/powder as fine as possible before snorting will reduce damage to the nose.



Starting low and waiting. It's important not to be tempted to take more if a person can't feel the effects quickly – it may be a different substance or strength to what they have taken before.

Not mixing with other drugs – especially other depressant drugs like alcohol or GHB. They can slow breathing down to dangerous levels.

Take a quarter sip water – staying hydrated and sticking to a low dose is sensible harm reduction advice.

## Ketamine and the law

Ketamine is a Class B drug, which means it's illegal to possess, give away or sell.

- Possession can result in up to 5 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.
- Supplying someone else, even friends, can result in up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.
- Like drink-driving, driving when high is dangerous and illegal. If someone is caught driving under the influence, they may receive a heavy fine, driving ban, or prison sentence.
- If the police catch people supplying illegal drugs in a home, club, bar or hostel, they can potentially prosecute the landlord, club owner or any other person concerned in the management of the premises.

## Where to go for help and support

**NHS 111** offers support on all issues including drugs and alcohol.

**Know The Score** has a live chat function where you can ask questions or ask for help [knowthescore.info/help-support](https://knowthescore.info/help-support)

**Frank**  
[talktofrank.com](https://talktofrank.com)

**The Mix**  
[themix.org.uk](https://themix.org.uk)

**Crew 2000**  
[crew.scot](https://crew.scot)

**Life Stuff** is an advice and information site for older teenagers and young adults.  
[life-stuff.org/](https://life-stuff.org/)