



Nottingham  
Recovery  
Network

Drug & Alcohol Support in Nottingham

# Ketamine

Ketamine is known by many names (Ket, Special K, Vitamin K, Super K and K) and is used recreationally for a number of reasons. It can be used for its proven anti-depressant effects, but mainly due to ability to alter the user's perceptions.

Ketamine is a powerful anaesthetic used in veterinary or medical practice where it usually comes in liquid form to be injected. The street version is usually a grainy white powder which is snorted or taken in tablet/crystal form. Legally produced Ketamine for medical use is pure and safe for the purpose for which it is intended. Illegal Ketamine is usually not pure, as drug dealers 'cut' Ketamine with other substances in order to make their supply go further. As a drug is passed from one dealer to another it may continue to be cut with other substances, with the end user not knowing what they may be taking. Ketamine is illegal to possess and can result in a prison sentence and/or an unlimited fine, as well as damaging future job prospects and restricting travel to many other countries.

**Short term effects can include;** panic attacks, unconsciousness, slurred speech, blurred vision, increased heart rate, difficulty breathing, nausea and sickness, paralysis, and lack of co-ordination.



**Long term effects can include;** damage to nasal passage and nose bleeds, mental health problems, poor concentration, loss of memory, anxiety, difficulty in coping with everyday situations and life, severe abdominal pain (K cramps), serious bladder damage, damage to the kidneys and urinary tract.

Ketamine can be highly addictive. Prolonged frequent use can lead to serious mental health problems such as psychosis (condition in which the mind seems to lose touch with reality).

Ketamine is not designed for daily use. Regular or daily patterns of use can result in damage to the bladder, which will continue as an enduring problem for the user. Some bladder damage is so severe that they require urostomy bags.

## **Harm Reduction Advice**

**Make sure you take it in a safe environment** with friends who know what you're doing. Using around other people means that emergency medical attention can be sought if you become unwell or are injured.

**Use with caution.** The larger the amount you use, the stronger the effects and the less predictable the outcome. Use small amounts to test the strength and purity. Remember it's an anaesthetic, if you hurt yourself you may not feel any pain.

**Injecting is the most risky way of using Ketamine.** If you choose to inject use a clean needle and syringe every time and never share any equipment! Snorting Ketamine and sharing equipment will also increase your risk of contracting blood borne viruses.

**Do not mix Ketamine with other substances.** Mixing Ketamine with depressant drugs like alcohol can seriously slow your breathing and heart rate. Being drunk and out of it on Ketamine is a very risky combination.

**For more information seek specialist advice.**

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