

## KETAMINE

<b>History</b>	Although wrongly described as a 'horse tranquiliser', ketamine is an anaesthetic used for animals, very young children and patients where there is a high risk of respiratory failure. It became popular in the late 1990s as a recreational drug on the clubbing scene, used in conjunction with other drugs to get a hallucinogenic, speedy effect. It has been associated with cases of 'date rape'.
<b>Street name</b>	K, Special K, Super K, Vitamin K, Ketalar, Ketaset
<b>Type</b>	
<b>Drug Effect</b>	Reduces awareness and sensitivity to pain but also inhibits movement. At lower doses users can feel disorientated with hallucinogenic effect such as sense distortions and possibly euphoria. Increased effort is required to move or speak. Hallucinations are more pronounced at higher doses and an experience described as 'k-holing' can occur. Perceptions are drastically altered and some users have reported 'out of body' experiences. People can feel paralysed and find movement difficult or impossible.
<b>Dependency</b>	Yes.
<b>Description</b>	White powder or ampoules for injection. Branded as Ketalar or Ketaset. Also appears in many tablets passed off as ecstasy.
<b>Street use</b>	Powder is usually snorted or swallowed though some people do inject it. Ampoules are typically injected.
<b>Withdrawal</b>	No physical withdrawal symptoms but psychological dependence can take some time to recede.
<b>Long term use</b>	<p>People concerned about their mental health should treat Ketamine with caution.</p> <p>Of great concern has being growing evidence that ketamine is linked to bladder damage. A number of regular users of ketamine have presented to medical services with symptoms of bladder problems. These have included difficulty in holding urine, pain on urinating, blood in urine and bladder pain. In some people this has resulted in severe bladder damage and scarring to the bladder. This has meant some people have had to have catheters fitted and a small number of people have had complete cystectomies (bladder removal).</p>

**Overdose**

A ketamine overdose can create feelings of unease or nausea and the user may begin vomiting. There is a risk of asphyxiation by vomit if the user is unconscious or unable to move. The central nervous system can also be slowed to the point where serious damage, death, or coma occurs especially when ketamine is injected.

Ketamine overdose is common among inexperienced users of the drug but it can also occur among more experienced users, particularly when ketamine is combined with other drugs such as alcohol or opiates.

**Legal Status**

Class C, Schedule 4