

Oral ketamine for pain relief

A guide for patients

What is ketamine?

Ketamine is an anaesthetic medication, which in small doses can be used to help control pain that has not responded well to standard treatment. It is particularly effective in pain caused by nerve damage and reduced blood supply. It is also effective in patients who have been taking opioids long term in the community. We use Ketamine in a syrup form that you take by mouth.

How does ketamine work?

Ketamine works by blocking the action of specific nerve endings in your spinal cord, which reduces the amplification of the pain messages sent to your brain.

When is ketamine used in hospital?

Ketamine may improve pain relief for patients who:

- Have pain that is not responding well to drugs such as Morphine.
- Have nerve pain such as phantom limb pain, particularly if there has been a poor response or increased side effects from medicines such as Gabapentin or Pregabalin.
- Have wounds or injuries that are very sensitive to pain.

Ketamine can improve pain control whilst helping to reduce the amount of other pain relief such as Morphine or Codeine.

Who can have ketamine?

Ketamine may not be suitable for all patients. Your suitability for it will be assessed by your anaesthetist and/or the Inpatient Pain Service in partnership with you. If there are no contra-indications (risks) to you having Ketamine, you will be prescribed ketamine syrup up to four times per day for a minimum of 48 hours following your surgery/injury but for no longer than seven days.

You will **not** be discharged home with a supply of Ketamine.

The syrup form of Ketamine is **unlicensed**. This means that the manufacturer has not applied for a licence to use it in a syrup form. Healthcare staff use unlicensed medications if they think the medication is likely to be effective and the benefits of treatment outweigh any associated risk.

More information about medicine licences can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/off-label-or-unlicensed-use-of-medicines-prescribers-responsibilities>

Are there any side effects?

Ketamine can cause feelings of anxiety, insomnia, or disorientation. Some people may experience hallucinations or flashbacks, but this is uncommon. Your nurses will be observing you for any of these effects but please tell them if you feel that you are experiencing any unpleasant effects so that the Ketamine can be reviewed and stopped if necessary.

For further information about Ketamine use in hospital, or if you would like to talk to one of the nurses about ketamine, please contact the Inpatient Pain Service nursing staff on:

01932 722 281 (direct line) or via our pager between the hours of 8am - 4.30pm.

01932 872000 (switchboard) and ask for pager 5042.

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.



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यदि आपको अनुवाद की ज़रूरत है तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 01932 723553

اگر آپ اس کا اردو زبان میں ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں، تو براؤزر اس فون نمبر 01932 723553 پر رابطہ کریں

Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

Se precisa de uma tradução por favor contacte: 01932 723553

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