

## How should I store ketamine?

Store in a dry place, below 25°C and out of reach of children. When you open a new bottle of ketamine liquid, write the date on the label. It keeps for 28 days after opening. Return unused or expired ketamine to a community pharmacy for disposal.

Although Ketamine is not licensed to treat pain, it has been used for many years for treating pain and doctors who specialise in pain management have a lot of experience using this medicine.

## Can I drive when I'm taking ketamine?

You are responsible for ensuring you are fit to drive. Northern Ireland law allows you to drive when taking medicines if your ability is not affected.

Do not drive or use machinery if:

- You have recently started taking ketamine
- The dose or frequency has changed recently
- You have taken alcohol along with ketamine
- You feel drowsy or sleepy, or can not concentrate.

## Is it safe to take other medicines while on ketamine?

Ketamine may increase the effects of other medicines that make you sleepy or dizzy. You may need lower doses of other pain medicines. Your doctor will adjust doses as needed.

Avoid grapefruit juice as it may increase ketamine levels. Tell your healthcare professionals what medicines you take, including any you buy in a pharmacy or shop, herbal remedies or recreational drugs.

## Can I take alcohol when I'm taking ketamine?

It is recommended you avoid alcohol while taking ketamine as effects like dizziness or sleepiness can worsen. Talk to your doctor if you want to discuss this further.

## Can I become addicted to ketamine?

Addiction is not a problem when the right dose is taken and reviewed correctly. If you no longer need ketamine, your doctor will support you to reduce it gradually. Do not stop taking it suddenly without medical advice.

# Ketamine

## for Pain in supportive & palliative care

### Information Leaflet for Patients

#### Further supply and advice

The hospital or hospice usually gives the first supply and will tick to tell you whether to reorder from your GP or hospital:



**GP**

Reorder at least a week before it's needed. Tell your community pharmacist as it may take time to obtain it. For advice or questions, talk to your GP or community nurse.



**Hospital**

A palliative medicine consultant will prescribe it and the hospital will supply. A member of the team will add contact details below for ordering, advice or questions.



This medicine is only for you. **Never give it to anyone else even if their symptoms appear to be the same as yours.**

## What is Ketamine used for?

Ketamine is used to treat nerve pain and some types of cancer pain that are difficult to control. It aims to stop pain signals being sent along nerves to the brain. The effects of Ketamine vary from person to person. It is not possible to tell who will respond to ketamine.

## How do I take my ketamine?

Ketamine is taken by mouth (oral solution) or as an injection

### **Ketamine oral solution (50mg in 5ml)**

You will start on a low dose. Your doctor will decide the dose and frequency and may adjust it depending on your pain.

Always follow the instructions on the label.

**Check the strength of your ketamine oral solution.  
It should be:**

**FIFTY milligrams (mg) of ketamine in FIVE millilitres (ml).**

**Take care not to confuse mg and ml**

**e.g. if you are prescribed 10mg, you will take 1ml.**

- Use an oral syringe to measure the right dose in ml.
- Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will show you how to do this.

**Never measure with a spoon.  
Do not drink straight from the bottle.**

If you find ketamine is not working as well as expected, contact your doctor. Do not take more than the doctor tells you, as this could cause side effects. If ketamine is ineffective in managing your pain, your doctor may consider stopping it and consider other options.

## Ketamine injection

A nurse will give this as an injection under the skin, or an infusion over 24 hours using a syringe pump.

### What if i miss a dose of regular ketamine?

If you miss a regular dose, take it when you remember. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, wait until then and don't take the missed dose. Never take a double dose. Tell your doctor if you miss more than one dose in 24 hours.

### What are the common side effects?

All medicines can cause side effects, though not everyone experiences them.

They may include:

Side effect	What to do
Feeling dizzy or sleepy, mood changes finding it hard to concentrate. 'Unreal' or 'far away' sensation	Tell your doctor. They may be able to help with this. <b>Do not drive or use machinery.</b>
High blood pressure. Fast heartbeat. Change in liver function.	These are monitored when you start ketamine and as needed.
Vivid dreams, hallucinations, jerking movements.	<b>Speak to your doctor or nurse as soon as possible. Do not take any more ketamine until you speak to them.</b>
Bladder pain, pain or blood when passing urine. This is rare and could be caused by infection rather than ketamine.	
Nausea, vomiting. Producing a lot of saliva	Tell your doctor who may be able to help.
Skin irritation, redness or swelling at the injection site.	Tell your nurse. They will check the site regularly.