



February 2024

## 2024 ADAA Ketamine Fact Sheet<sup>1</sup>

It is important that you speak to your medical provider about all aspects of Ketamine and ensure that you understand the safety protocols, and dosing, surrounding the use of Ketamine for mental health disorders.

Please note that Ketamine is currently not Food and Drug Administration ([FDA](#)) approved for **any psychiatric disorder**.

SPRAVATO (Esketamine nasal spray) has been approved by the [FDA](#) to treat adults with treatment-resistant depression (TRD) and depressive symptoms in adults with major depressive disorder (MDD) with acute suicidal ideation and behavior.

### What is Ketamine?

Ketamine is a medicine developed for anesthesia during surgery and has been used for that purpose in children, adults, and animals.

More recently, ketamine has been found to be a valuable and effective rapid-acting treatment for depression, anxiety, and certain pain disorders.

### What are the uses of Ketamine?

Recreational (Drug Enforcement Agency scheduled drug), psychopharmacology (IV, intramuscular injection, nasal, oral, sublingual ( you take the medicine under your tongue), and anesthesia.

### How does Ketamine work?

Although its precise mechanism of action for use in psychiatry is not known, depression, anxiety, pain, and other forms of stress damage the communication system between areas of the brain responsible for memory, learning, and higher-order thinking. Ketamine can promote the materials necessary to repair this damage within hours.

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## **What can Ketamine help?**

Major depression, the depressed phase of bipolar disorder (bipolar depression), postpartum depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), pain syndromes such as fibromyalgia and complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS), also known as reflex sympathetic dystrophy (RSD), and some substance use disorders.

## **Are there any conditions that may make Ketamine dangerous or ineffective?**

- Uncontrolled blood pressure,
- Unstable heart disease,
- Untreated thyroid disease,
- Active substance abuse,
- Current manic phase of bipolar disorder, or
- Active psychotic (hallucinations or delusions) symptoms.

*Make sure you tell your doctor about all the medications that you are taking, including if you are taking recreational drugs or drinking heavily.*

*ADAA's suggestion is to take a written list of all your medications with your dosages to all medical appointments.*

## **What are the risks associated with Ketamine?**

The dose used for the treatment of mood and anxiety disorders is very low and safe. The typical dose for psychiatric indications is a small fraction of the dose used in anesthesia. During ketamine treatments, blood pressure and heart rate may increase. This is monitored to ensure safety.

## **Is Ketamine used for psychiatric or pain disorders covered by insurance?**

You must check with your insurance provider.

## **What is it like to have a Ketamine treatment?**

What patients experience depends on many factors, such as mode of administration (e.g., intravenous, intramuscular, intranasal, etc.), the dose of ketamine, individual sensitivity to ketamine, amongst others.

For most patients that receive subanesthetic doses (e.g., lower than the dose required to achieve complete anesthesia). to treat psychiatric and pain conditions the experience is pleasant and calming. It can induce a sense of disconnection to one's body, and a distortion of senses, such as vision, hearing, orientation to time, and others. For some, it can be disorienting, anxiety provoking, and unpleasant.

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<sup>1</sup> Most of this fact sheet information is from [ASKP - American Society of Ketamine Physicians, Psychotherapists & Practitioners](#)