

Ketamine

Green, K, special K, super K.

What is ketamine?

Ketamine is a powerful anaesthetic drug which has been used for operations on humans and animals.

In 1992 it found its way on to the club and rave scene in the UK when people took it thinking they were buying ecstasy. It has been likened to the drug [PCP](#).



Ketamine comes in a variety of forms, ranging from its liquid pharmaceutical state, for injecting, through to pill to be taken orally. Powders are sniffed up the nose or sometimes smoked.

Ketalar solution for injecting

The level of use is not well known however. Anecdotal evidence suggest the drug is chiefly found at hard-core dance clubs/events and squat-parties, where hallucinogens and stimulants are a favourite among goers. The drug is thought to be on the increase among college students, who prefer it because it is cheap and often easy to get from local medical sources.

The price of ketamine varies from 10 to 20 a gram depending on who it is bought from and where.

The law

As of January 1st 2006 Ketamine is a class C Drug under the [Misuse of Drugs Act](#) 1971.

Effects/risks

Ketamine has pain killing effects but also alters perception. People who use it commonly say they feel detached from themselves and others around them. The drug is described as dose specific. This means the amount taken will strongly determine the extent and type of effect the drug will have.

At low doses (roughly 100mg), the user will feel euphoric and experience rushes or waves of energy. At higher doses (200mg and over) the user will often experience hallucinations, similar to [LSD](#), and the typical out-of-body or detached experience. This is often followed by numbness, often in the limbs, and strange muscle movements. Users may also feel sick or throw up - dangerous at high doses if the user is unconscious or very disorientated and can choke on their vomit.

Accidents from lack of co-ordination may be more likely and large doses could lead to loss of consciousness. It may be difficult to know how strong a dose is being taken and what else is mixed in with it.

In general, literature on the consequences of long-term ketamine use is sparse, but reports suggest that flashbacks, memory, attention and vision impairment may result from frequent and prolonged use. [Tolerance](#) develops quickly, requiring more of the drug to achieve the same repeated high. Stimulant-like weight loss and loss of appetite may occur during periods of heavy use, as well as psychological dependence, psychosis and gradual loss of contact with the real world.

Ketamine use can also be particularly dangerous if used at the same time as [depressant](#) drugs such as [alcohol](#), [barbiturates](#), [heroin](#) or tranquillisers as it can shut the body down to such an effect that the lungs or heart stop functioning.

There are few known cases of death from ketamine use in the UK.

Updated Jan 2006

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