

Patient Information Leaflet

Ketamine

Name of the medicine:

Ketamine 50mg/5ml oral solution, Ketamine injection 50mg/ml, Ketamine Injection 10mg/ml

The information given in this leaflet should be read along with any patient information leaflet provided by the manufacturer with your medicine. Click [here](#)

What is it for?

Ketamine is normally used as an anaesthetic for short operations, particularly in children. In much smaller doses it can help to control nerve pain in palliative care. Ketamine may be used when this nerve pain has not responded to other treatments.

Most medicines available in the UK have a licence for use. The licence describes the ways in which the medicine can be given and the conditions it can be used to treat. In order to get a licence, the manufacturer of the medicine has to show that it is safe and made to a high standard.

Use of ketamine to help relieve pain by the oral or subcutaneous route is outside its licence. Medicines used in palliative care are quite often used in this way. There is experience and research to support the use of ketamine in this way. The person who prescribed your medicine will have considered carefully the benefits for you.

Information on this is not included in the information leaflet supplied with the medicine.

We are giving you this extra leaflet to tell you about the reason(s) why you are taking this medicine and to highlight other information.

What form(s) of this medicine are there and how is it usually taken?

Ketamine is given as a liquid medicine by mouth (oral route), usually up to four times a day. The form of ketamine that you may be prescribed is an oral solution in a bottle. If this oral solution is not available, the ketamine injection solution may be used and you may either swallow it (oral) or place it under your tongue (sublingual). Ketamine can have an unpleasant bitter taste. Drinking fruit juice, squash or a similar soft drink after taking the medicine can help to disguise the taste.

Ketamine can also be given by injection. If you need an injection this will be given by a doctor or nurse via a needle under your skin (subcutaneous). A small device known as a cannula will be placed into your skin. The injection will usually be given using this every time so that you do not feel a needle.

If it becomes difficult to give you injections four times a day, then you may be given the ketamine using a continuous infusion (ketamine is given continuously over 24 hours). This is done using a small portable battery operated pump known as a syringe pump. The ketamine dose that you need for 24 hours is in a syringe, placed into the pump and is slowly pushed down a tube (called a line), through the cannula (needle under the skin) and into your blood stream. A nurse will replace the syringe contents every day.

T34 Syringe Pump patient leaflet:

<https://www.palliativecareguidelines.scot.nhs.uk/media/86807/t34-syringe-pumps-2020-10.pdf>

What are the most common side effects I might experience?

The dose of ketamine which you start with may be quite low to try to avoid side-effects. The dose may be gradually increased to help relieve your nerve pain. It may take a period of time to get the dose right for your pain. However you may experience vivid dreams, nightmares, mood swings, hallucinations or agitation at the start of treatment or when the dose is increased. If you experience these side effects, they can be helped by adding another medicine for a short period of time. You should tell your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms.

Ketamine may increase your blood pressure and heart rate. Your doctor or nurse will monitor your blood pressure and pulse when you start treatment and possibly if the dose is increased.

Ketamine can sometimes cause problems with your urine. If you notice that you start to have frequent urine infections or you have pain in your bladder (where urine is stored in your body), please let your doctor or nurse know.

Ketamine may cause skin irritation if it is given by a subcutaneous injection or pump. Your nurse will check your skin at site where the needle (cannula) is each day and change the cannula if needed. If you notice any problems with the skin around the needle e.g. pain, redness, swelling, please let your doctor or nurse know.

What other information should I know about this medicine?

What do I do if I forget to take a regular dose of oral ketamine?

Take the dose as soon as you remember. Do not take a double dose to make up for the missed one. If you are sick within 30 minutes of taking a dose, repeat the dose as soon as you feel better. If you miss more than one dose through being unwell, contact your doctor or nurse.

How long will I need to take ketamine?

This will depend on why you were started on ketamine and how your pain responds to the treatment. The palliative care specialist or your doctor will discuss this with you.

Can ketamine interfere with my other medicines?

You may need to have the dose of your other pain relieving medicines reduced if the ketamine works well for your pain. Signs that you may be on too high a dose of other strong painkillers that you may be taking like morphine, oxycodone or fentanyl are:

- More sleepy than usual
- Feeling sick more often
- Restlessness or jumpiness
- Bad dreams

If this happens contact your doctor or nurse.

Can I drive?

You should not drive after starting ketamine until you have discussed driving with your doctor. For further information, please refer to the information leaflet provided via the link:

<https://www.palliativecareguidelines.scot.nhs.uk/media/87338/strong-painkillers-and-driving-2020-10.pdf>

Can I drink alcohol?

It is best to minimise alcohol consumption to avoid drowsiness.

Who should I phone if I need advice urgently about my ketamine?

Your own GP practice or NHS 24 may be able to advise you. You may also be given a contact number for your local specialist palliative care service.

Repeat prescriptions

Ketamine oral solution is not kept in stock by most community pharmacies. It may take a few working days for your local pharmacist to obtain ketamine oral liquid. Please make sure you get a prescription from your GP and ask your local pharmacist to order more for you at least a few days before you run out. You or your representative may be asked to sign for collecting this medicine at the community pharmacy.

Safe storage

Your medication needs to be kept in a safe place out of the reach of children. It needs to be stored in the original container. Return unused medication to a pharmacy.