

## Harm Reduction

# Depressants

## Ketamine

**Special K, Vitamin K, Sugar K, Lady K, cat tranquilizer**

### What is it?

Ketamine is a fast-acting pain killer originally manufactured for use in veterinary medicine. It alters awareness, perceptions, and senses. It also increases heart rate and blood pressure.

#### Why do people use it?

- ◆ To become more sociable, or increase social interaction
- ◆ To increase relaxation
- ◆ To experience unusual sensory perceptions
- ◆ Taken in high doses, hallucinations and dissociation are common

#### What can go wrong?

- ◆ Loss of control of your body and behaviours resulting in impaired judgment and risky behaviours, such as unsafe sex.
- ◆ Taking too much may result in drowsiness or coma.
- ◆ Being unaware of surroundings may lead to injuries or falls.
- ◆ Prolonged use is linked to bladder and kidney issues.

#### How does it work?

Absorbed through the membranes in the nose and travels to the brain. Ketamine affects the naturally occurring chemicals in the brain related to mood regulation, energy, and perceptions of the world. Some people feel happy and relaxed, whereas others feel anxious and restless.

Information adapted from  
[heretohelp.ca](http://heretohelp.ca), [camh.ca](http://camh.ca)  
& [towardtheheart.com](http://towardtheheart.com)  
For more information visit their websites.

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1. Don't take with other substances, especially other depressant drugs and alcohol.
2. Start out by taking a small amount. You can always use more, but you can't change your mind and take less.
3. Try to avoid buying more than you intend to take. This will help manage how much you are taking and decrease the chances of negative effects.
4. Use with trusted people in a safe space. If for any reason you feel unsafe, have a friend you can turn to for support or help to minimize the risk of harm.

## Overdose

### What to look for:

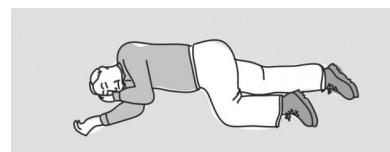
1. Slow or no breathing
2. Slow or no pulse
3. Pale, cool skin
4. Vomiting

### What to do:

## CALL 9-1-1

**Remain calm and stay with the person until help arrives.**

**If you have to leave the person unattended, put them in the recovery position, as below.**



**Discovery Youth & Family Substance Use Services**

Victoria/South Island: 250-519-5313

Cowichan Valley: 250-737-2029

Nanaimo/Ladysmith: 250-739-5790

Oceanside area: 250-947-8215

Mt Waddington area: 250-902-6063

