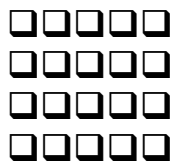


Patient Information Leaflet



KETAMINE for pain



The name of the treatment you have been prescribed is ketamine.

What is ketamine used for?

Ketamine is a pain killer used to help relieve severe pain. It may be particularly helpful in pain that is caused by nerve damage.

How should I take ketamine?

Oral ketamine -

Ketamine is usually given by mouth for pain, and should be taken at regular intervals at the dose prescribed by your doctor. A tablet or capsule form of ketamine is not available, but the injection can be taken by mouth. The injection has a bitter taste and so is usually added to orange juice or cola drinks. When you have your prescription dispensed the hospital pharmacy will usually put the contents of the injection vial into a glass medicine bottle and give you an oral syringe to measure the dose. Alternatively the Pharmacy may supply you with a ready flavoured ketamine solution.

Ketamine infusion -

If you have difficulty swallowing or if the doctors are finding it difficult to control your pain they may decide to give you ketamine in a “syringe driver”. This is an infusion (or drip) that runs continually under the skin. If you go home on a syringe driver a district nurse will need to visit your home to change the infusion every 24 hours.

Does ketamine have any side effects?

Ketamine may make you feel more sleepy than normal, or make it difficult for you to concentrate. Occasionally it can make you a little confused, anxious or restless or have vivid dreams.

If you have any new symptoms once you start ketamine always tell your doctor. If you feel sleepy or cannot concentrate do not drive or operate machinery.

Can I take any other medicines?

Certain medicines can affect the dose of ketamine that you need. Any doctor prescribing a new medicine for you should check that it can be taken with your usual medication. If you are going to buy any over the counter medicines from a community pharmacy always tell the pharmacist what medicines you are already taking.

Can I drink alcohol whilst taking ketamine?

You can drink alcohol in moderation, but it may make you feel more drowsy. Remember that this will affect your ability to drive or operate machinery.

How long will I have to take ketamine for?

You can continue to take ketamine for as long as it helps your pain and you are not having any serious side effects. It may be necessary for your doctor to change the dose during your treatment. Always tell your doctor if your pain is not controlled.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

Take as soon as you remember. If it is already time to take your next dose only take one dose, never double up.

Ketamine does not currently hold a product license for the treatment of pain.

What is a product license?

A government department, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), issues product licenses. In order to obtain a license, the manufacturer or importer of a medicine provides evidence to the MHRA to show that the medicine works for the illness to be treated, does not have too many side effects and is made to a high standard. Obtaining a license takes a long time and can be very expensive.

Ketamine does not have a product license for the treatment of pain because the manufacturer has not yet applied for one. It is however licensed for other uses. At the present time there are a number of reports in the medical journals of people using ketamine for pain, and so far it has been shown to be safe and effective.

Doctors may prescribe medicines that do not have a product license. Your doctor is aware that ketamine does not hold a product license for this use but feels that it may be of help to you.

How do I obtain further supplies?

Ketamine will usually be supplied by the hospital pharmacy, as it is not easily obtained by a Community Pharmacy. If you think you will run out of medication before your next Consultant appointment please contact the Consultant's secretary **before** you run out so that a new prescription can be written.

Who can I contact for further information?

For more information on the use of ketamine for the treatment of pain contact the doctor responsible for this treatment or speak to a pharmacist at York Hospital.

**This information is available in other formats on request.
Please telephone us on 01904 725796 if you require
it in large print, Braille or on audiotape.**

**This leaflet was produced by the Palliative Care and Pharmacy
Departments of York Hospital**

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