



Drugs a-to-z

Ketamine: Factsheet



Evidence ratings:

This resource has undergone expert review. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year: Year 9-10, Year 11-12

Targeted Drugs: Ketamine

Tags: K, special K, Vitamin K, horse tranquillizer, Ket

Time Allocated: Partial lesson (under 45mins)

Origin: Australian

Cost:

Free

What is Ketamine?

Ketamine is also known as K, Ket, special K, Vitamin K, or horse tranquiliser.

Ketamine (ketamine hydrochloride) is a white powder, usually sold in 'bumps' or grams. A 'bump' is a small amount of powder which is snorted through a small glass inhaler called a bumper. Ketamine can also be swallowed, smoked, or injected.

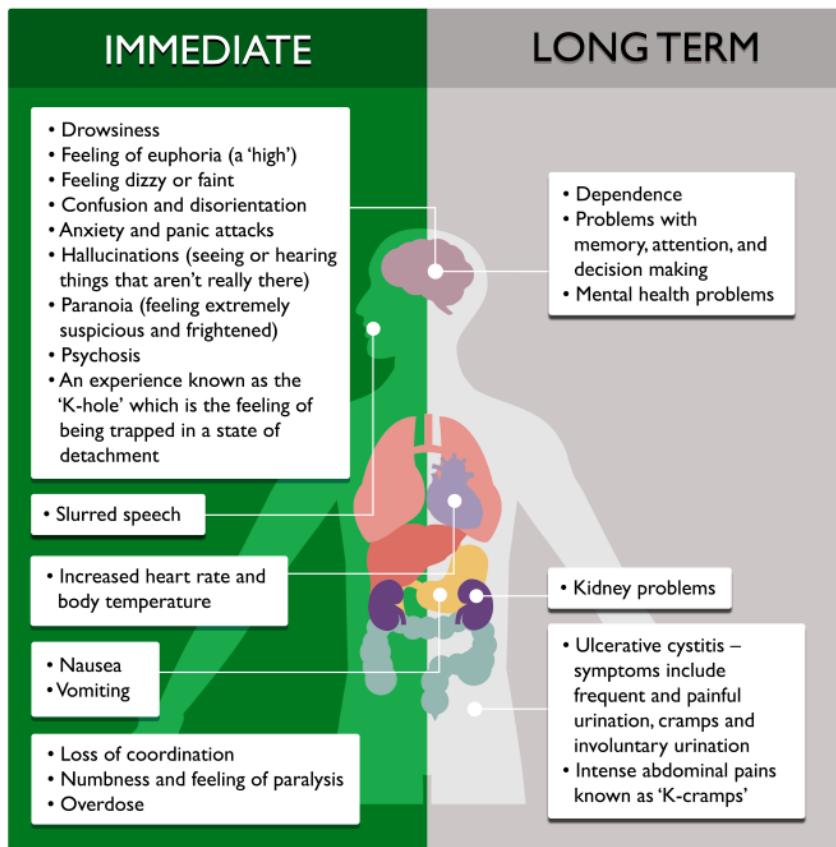
Ketamine is commonly used by veterinarians to sedate animals such as horses. As with all drugs sold in powder form, ketamine may also be sold 'cut' (mixed) with other white powder substances which may or may not be harmful - people using this drug can never be 100% sure of what they're getting.

What are the effects of Ketamine?

If snorted or 'bumped', ketamine takes effect within 5-10 minutes (longer if swallowed). Its effects can last for a couple of hours.

The effects of ketamine vary, but may include:

Immediate	Long-term
Increased heart rate and body temperature	Dependence (see glossary)
Drowsiness	Problems with memory, attention, and decision making
Feeling of euphoria (a 'high')	Mental health problems
Loss of coordination	Ulcerative cystitis – symptoms include frequent and painful urination, cramps and involuntary urination.
Slurred speech	Intense abdominal pains known as 'K-cramps'
Feeling dizzy or faint	Kidney problems
Confusion and disorientation	
Numbness and a feeling of paralysis	
Nausea and vomiting	
Anxiety and panic attacks	
Hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't really there)	
Paranoia (feeling extremely suspicious and frightened)	
Psychosis (see glossary)	
An experience known as the 'K-hole' which is the feeling of being trapped in a state of detachment. This can be frightening	
Overdose	



Evidence Base

This factsheet was developed following expert review by researchers at the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use at the University of Sydney, the National Drug & Alcohol Research Centre at the University of New South Wales, and the National Drug Research Institute at Curtin University.

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