

Ketamine

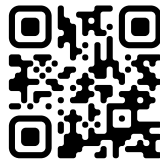
A HARM REDUCTION GUIDE



**QUEERS & PEERS
TOGETHER FOR SAFER USE**

Ketamine

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TOGETHER FOR SAFER USE**

SEX, DRUGS, & CARE FOR ALL
queerhealth.info/sdc4all



ANTIDOTE
LONDON FRIEND



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WHAT IS HARM REDUCTION?

Harm reduction is a practice that aims to minimise the negative impacts of using drugs. It means providing care, instead of judgement, to people who are using them.

This includes giving information about how to use drugs more safely, how to recognise signs of overdose or withdrawal, and when and where to seek help.

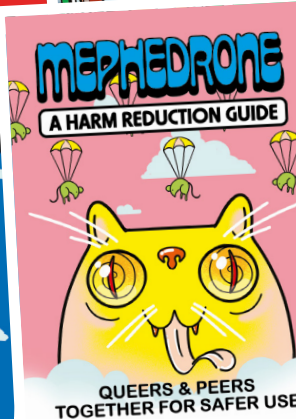
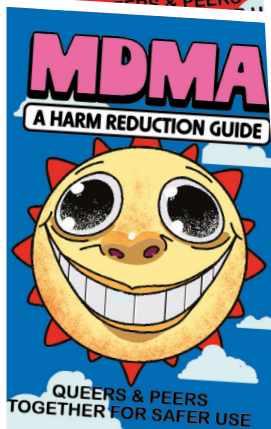
This booklet contains some essential tips about how to use ketamine as safely as possible.

There's more harm reduction advice about ketamine and other drugs at:
queerhealth.info/sdc4all

OTHER GUIDES IN THIS SERIES INCLUDE:



- Cocaine
- GHB/GBL
- MDMA
- Mephedrone





WHAT IS KETAMINE

Ketamine is an anaesthetic drug - usually found as a white or very light brown powder - that has hallucinogenic properties.

Because of its anaesthetic quality, ketamine reduces physical sensations in the body and can put us in a warm, trance-like state and make us feel euphoric, calm and 'out-of-body'.

At higher doses, ketamine can make us hallucinate or dissociate and even feel disconnected from our bodies entirely - which is sometimes called entering a 'K-hole'.

RISKS AND SIDE-EFFECTS

While some people use ketamine to experience a K-hole, other people might enter one accidentally, which can be scary! If this happens to you, or someone you're with, **don't worry - it will pass!**

When someone is in a K-hole, they can be quite vulnerable - so stay with them while they ride it out.

Because it's an anaesthetic, someone can hurt themselves on ketamine without even realising it, so consider moving them to a calmer, quieter place to avoid injury.

Mixing ketamine with 'downers' dangerously depresses the nervous system. This increases the likelihood of experiencing a K-hole and can lead to unconsciousness or death.

Avoid mixing ketamine with downers like alcohol, GHB/ GBL, diazepam, benzos, sleeping pills, sedatives, opiates (like tramadol), and antihistamines.



DOSING

The most common way to take ketamine is by snorting it.

You can also swallow ketamine (by wrapping a dose in cigarette paper) for a less intense but longer lasting high.

The right dose of ketamine differs from person to person and depends on things like their weight and tolerance.

Roughly, though, a **light dose** is 10-30mg and a **more common dose** is 30-75mg.

It's usually not possible to measure doses of a powder or crystal when out and about. It's a good idea to **invest in some milligram scales** to measure doses in advance (like if it's going to be swallowed) or to visualise how different doses look (for when it's snorted later).



SAFER SNORTING

Snorting powders like ketamine carries some risks.

It can lead to infections and frequent snorting can damage the nostrils (which can make someone more prone to infections or cause long-term scarring).

Hepatitis C is especially easily transmitted by snorting - it can survive on surfaces for up to six weeks!

Someone can reduce long-term damage caused to their nose from snorting by:

- **alternating nostrils** every time they snort
- using a straw to **snort higher up the nose** to avoid damaging the septum
- taking a **break if the nose is bleeding**
- **using a saline rinse** to gently clean the nose at the end of the night or session

Someone can reduce their risks of getting an infection from snorting by:

- **avoiding sharing** snorting equipment
- **using a clean straw** or clean rolled up piece of paper - rather than used bank notes - to snort lines
(Remember: venues usually have clean straws behind the bar!)
- **carrying hand sanitiser to disinfect any equipment** (especially keys, cards and surfaces)
- **consider keeping a specific, clean card for crushing or cutting drugs** (to avoid using a bank card that comes into contact with ATMs or payment devices)

FREQUENT KET USE

Because of the dissociative, escapist effects it produces, people can become psychologically dependent on ketamine.

They can also build up a tolerance if they use it regularly, meaning they need higher doses to experience its effects.

Long-term, frequent use of ketamine, especially at high

doses, can have a negative impact on **short and long-term memory**.

It can also cause serious **bladder problems** - including painful bladder crystals and difficulty peeing.

To avoid the effects of over-use, **limit the number of times a month** you use ketamine (at least less than twice a week) and take breaks from using.

Drinking **green tea regularly**, including in the hours before using, has also been shown to reduce risks of developing bladder crystals.

DRUG TESTING

Sometimes, people are sold drugs that are over-dosed, or contain substances other than the drug they think they are buying, which have much stronger effects. This can cause fatal overdoses, even in experienced drug users.

It's always a good idea to test drugs before using them. Links to drug testing services - including options for testing drugs at home - can be found at **[queerhealth.info/sdc4all](https://www.queerhealth.info/sdc4all)**

FURTHER SUPPORT

If you or someone you know needs support with their drug use (including addiction and dependence), you can find free LGBTQ+ inclusive support at: londonfriend.org.uk/antidote/ and more general support at: talktofrank.com

For more harm reduction advice, and advice on what to do in an emergency or if someone is overdosing visit: queerhealth.info/sdc4all

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