

# Ketamine FAQs

## **What is ketamine and how does it work?**

Ketamine is a dissociative anesthetic commonly used in hospitals and medical settings. First synthesized in 1956, ketamine was employed during the Vietnam War for surgical procedures and was approved for medical use by the FDA in 1970. In recent years, clinical researchers have discovered a range of additional applications for ketamine to treat psychological and medical conditions such as treatment-resistant depression, anxiety, PTSD, substance use issues, and chronic pain.

Ketamine appears to work by targeting the NMDA receptors in the brain, providing rapid and significant relief from mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety. Research has shown that ketamine enhances the production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) resulting in its antidepressant effects. BDNF also promotes neuroplasticity, helping your brain learn and adapt to break free from “stuck” patterns of mood, thought, and behavior.

## **What conditions can ketamine treat?**

Studies show that ketamine can be effective in treating mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, addiction, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some people also seek ketamine treatment for psychological and spiritual exploration to gain a broader perspective on life and spirituality.

## **Is ketamine safe?**

Yes. Ketamine is widely used as an anesthetic agent in medical practice, both in the US and around the world. It is regarded as extremely safe with minimal risks of cardiac issues or respiratory depression. Furthermore, the doses of ketamine provided during ketamine-assisted therapy treatments are far below the levels used safely for anesthetic purposes.

We believe ketamine is the best compound to introduce someone to psychedelic medicine due to its high safety profile and anxiety reducing effect. Most people experience a sense of calm and safety during ketamine treatment, which makes this an ideal medicine for someone trying a psychedelic for the first time.

## **Is ketamine addictive?**

In the dosages and frequency of administration we utilize for ketamine-assisted therapy treatments, ketamine does not pose any concerns for addiction. We carefully monitor all patients for tolerance and continually assess responses to treatment to optimize the benefits of ketamine in your care.

## **How quickly does ketamine work?**

Ketamine's rapid response rate is one of its most significant advantages over SSRIs and other mental health treatment approaches. People will often notice benefits in a matter of hours, as opposed to weeks or months for other pharmacological treatments. Studies show that ketamine can facilitate acute reduction of depression, suicidality, and anxiety symptoms in patients within a day or two of treatment.

## **Does ketamine have any side effects?**

Some people may experience side effects from ketamine treatment. These are typically mild and transient, wearing off within a few hours following treatment. A few people may experience side effects that can include nausea and elevated heart rate or blood pressure. You will be carefully screened for underlying medical concerns prior to taking ketamine to ensure you are a good fit for this treatment. As needed, anti-nausea and antihypertensive medications may be administered to prevent or reduce any side effects.

Ketamine produces a feeling of disconnection from one's body and a non-ordinary state of consciousness. This may be experienced as distortions in perception, time, and sense of self. We believe these effects are integral to the therapeutic potential of ketamine, freeing you from typical thought patterns and providing a "break" from your usual state of being. Ketamine-assisted therapy treatment often involves exploration of the novel sensory, emotional, and cognitive material that may arise during a ketamine session, which may provide useful insights to learn from and integrate into your daily life.

## **How is ketamine administered?**

We provide ketamine via two different routes of administration: Intramuscular injection (IM), and Sublingual (Oral).

## **How many sessions will I need?**

The number of recommended ketamine-assisted therapy sessions depends on your specific treatment needs. We will work with you to determine your specific needs.

Some people may return for occasional booster sessions every few months to maintain these benefits. These numbers are an estimate and may vary person to person based on their specific needs and treatment response over time. For those engaging in ketamine-assisted therapy, additional preparatory and integration sessions will be involved as recommended by your therapist.

