

Safety at the Ceremonies & Medical Guidelines

Important Medical Precautions

Ricardo has many years of experience in holding medicine events and knows the safe use of Ayahuasca in its traditional context. Please note that in certain cases working with Ayahuasca can carry health risks: if you have any heart, liver or kidney, or other serious medical problems, you should inform us at the first opportunity, and discuss the issues with a doctor who is aware of the issues Ayahuasca may raise.

Our priority is your safety and well-being, within the events guiding you to personal healing and growth. We will provide the most secure environment to work with Ayahuasca we possibly can, and will ensure your welfare as best we can at all time. In return we ask that you behave responsibly and do not endanger yourself or others.

It is necessary that you agree to disclose, in confidence, any known medical conditions and/or use of any medication, at the time of booking. By coming to the medicine event, you are declaring that you are in a physical and mental condition appropriate to the activities described in the dietary and medical guidelines, and agree that you participate at your own risk and that we cannot accept liability for any accident or injury. Certain drugs and medications have been found to not be compatible with Ayahuasca. It is essential to stop taking the following substances, and give your system sufficient time to remove them from the body, before you begin a workshop. Please consult your doctor if you are in any doubt: you certainly should not suddenly stop taking prescribed medications (including antidepressants) without consulting your doctor.

The following medications are unsafe in combination with Ayahuasca:

Any medication that contains MAO inhibitors. These medications are known to cause dangerous side effects when taken in conjunction with Ayahuasca. It is critical that you stop taking these drugs and allow plenty of time for your system to be cleared of these substances.

Any medication which has an effect on the serotonin system, including Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) (i.e. antidepressants such as Wellbutrin, Prozac, Zoloft, Effexor, etc.).

Combining these medications with Ayahuasca can induce serotonin syndrome—far more severely than with foods containing tryptophan, and with potentially fatal results. We advise you to stop taking SSRI medications six weeks prior to a workshop to allow the system to clear in time; some of these drugs may cause side effects when you stop taking them, and you should allow plenty of time for these to subside. You should not abruptly stop taking them without discussing the matter with your doctor. Please note that the herbal antidepressant St. John's Wort (*Hypericum Perforatum*) also must not be taken directly prior to working with Ayahuasca, although the system can clear this in 2 weeks before commencing a workshop.

Other medications you must suspend taking are decongestants, cold medications, allergy medications, antihistamines, sedatives, tranquilizers, amphetamines (including Adderall), some hypertensive medications, sympathomimetic amines including pseudoephedrine and ephedrine, carbamazepine, methylphenidate (Ritalin), macromerine, phenylalanine, tyrosine, tryptophan, asarone/calamus, asthma inhalers and diet pills. Although Ayahuasca has not been found to cause psychosis or other psychiatric disturbances, it can be dangerous to those with a history of psychological problems. Please tell us, in confidence, about any history of mental health problems.

If you have a heart condition or chronic high blood pressure you cannot be accepted on an event.

It is not safe to drink Ayahuasca when you are pregnant after 5 months of pregnancy. Before you can drink the first month an average portion and after the first month some sips to connect with the plant and the spirit of the fetus.

Special note to diabetics: MAOIs may change the amount of insulin or oral antidiabetic medication that you need. If you are diabetic, please contact us first before making a reservation to discuss your particular case.

Advise on drugs and medications to avoid when working with Ayahuasca: This is a comprehensive information page of medical, botanical and nutrition interaction guidelines provided by Ayahuasca Forums.

In general, from an Amazonian plant healers' traditional perspective, when a patient or an apprentice is working with medicinal plants, especially Ayahuasca and some other important medicinal plants like Chiric Sanango, Wayracaspi, Toé etc., it is preferable to not take any other substances or medicines, as it may cause cutipado, or in other words interfere with the plants energy and provoke unwanted reactions.

It is important to suspend any kind of psycho-pharmacy and pharmaceutical depression treatments between 14 to 35 days before drinking Ayahuasca. More specific advice is available subject to providing details of the particular medication in question.

Before booking to attend an event, it is important that we have full disclosure of all medications/drugs and the length of time any guest/volunteer has been taking them.

Participants with hepatic conditions must first consult with us and provide more information about the liver condition. People with tuberculosis must not take Ayahuasca.

These drugs and meds are potentially dangerous with MAOIs:

Other MAOIs

SSRI's (any selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor)

Antihypertensives (high blood pressure medicine)

Appetite suppressants (diet pills)

Medicine for asthma, bronchitis, or other breathing problems; antihistamines, medicines for colds, sinus problems, hay fever, or allergies (Actifed DM, Benadryl, Benylin, Chlor-Trimeton, Compoz. These include Bromarest-DM or-DX, Dimetane-DX cough syrup, Dristan Cold & Flu, Phenergan with Dextromethorphan, Robitussin-DM, Vicks formula 44-D several Tylenol cold, cough, and flu preparations, and many others—any drug with DM or Tuss in its name.)

CNS (centralnervous system) depressants

Antipsychotics

Barbiturates

Alcohol

Illegal or recreational drugs that are very dangerous to combine with MAOIs:

Cocaine

Amphetamines (meth-, dex-, amphetamine)

MDMA (Ecstasy)

MDA

MDEA

PMA

Dextromethorphan (DXM)

Illegal or recreational drugs that may be dangerous to combine with MAOIs:

Opiates

Mescaline (any phenethylamine)

Barbiturates

Other psychoactives that should not be combined with MAOIs:

Kratom

Kava

Note about interaction with marijuana:

Smoking marijuana before the Ayahuasca session may stupefy and darken the overall experience acting as a blockage for the visionary plant to manifest in the fullest way. Given the general amplified sensitivity of all participants of Ayahuasca session, marijuana negatively affects not just the person who used it, but also potentially other participants' experiences as well as the overall energy level of the medicine circle.

Some specific pharmaceutical drugs that should not be combined with MAOIs (some are mild risks, others serious):

Actifed

Adderall

Alaproclate

Albuterol (Proventil, Ventolin)

Amantadine hydrochloride (Symmetrel)

Amineptine

Amitriptyline

Amoxapine (Asendin)
Atomoxetine
Befloxedone
Benadryl
Benylin
Benzedrine
Benzphetamine (Didrex)
Bicifadine
Brasofensine
Brofaromine
Bupropion (Wellbutrin)
Buspirone (BuSpar) Butriptyline
Carbamazepine (Tegretol, Eptol)
Chlorpheniramine
ChlorTrimeton
Cimoxetone
Citalopram
Clomipramine (Anafranil)
Codeine
Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril)
Cyclizine (Marezine)
Dapoxetine
Desipramine (Pertofrane, Norpramin)
Desvenlafaxine
Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine)
Dextromethorphan (DXM)
Dibenzepin
Dienolide kavapyrone desmethoxyyangonin
Diethylpropion
Disopyramide (Norpace)
Disulfiram (Antabuse)

Dopamine (Intropin)
Dosulepin
Doxepin (Sinequan)
Duloxetine
Emsam
Ephedrine
Epinephrine (Adrenalin)
Escitalopram
Femoxetine
Fenfluramine (Pondimin)
Flavoxate Hydrochloride (Urispas)
Fluoxetine (Prozac)
Fluvoxamine
Furazolidone (Furoxone)
Guanethedine
Guanadrel (Hylorel)
Guanethidine (Ismelin)
Hydralazine (Apresoline)
5Hydroxytryptophan
Imipramine (Tofranil)
Iprindole
Iproniazid (Marsilid, Iprozid, Ipronid, Rivivol, Propilniazida)
Iproclozide
Isocarboxazid (Marplan)
Isoniazid (Laniazid, Nydrazid)
Isoniazidrifampin (Rifamate, Rimactane)
Isoproterenol (Isuprel)
Ldopa (Sinemet)
Levodopa (Dopar, Larodopa)
Linezolid (Zyvox, Zyvoxid) ☒ Lithium (Eskalith)
Lofepramine

Loratadine (Claritin)
Maprotiline (Ludiomil)
Medifoxamine
Melitracen
Meperidine (Demerol)
Metaproterenol (Alupent, Metaprel)
Metaraminol (Aramine)
Methamphetamine (Desoxyn)
Methyldopa (Aidomet)
Methylphenidate (Ritalin)
Mianserin
Milnacipran
Minaprine
Mirtazapine (Remeron)
Moclobemide
Montelukast (Singulair)
Nefazodone
Nialamide
Nisoxetine
Nomifensine
Norepinephrine (Levophed)
Nortriptyline (Aventyl)
Oxybutyninchloride (Ditropan)
Oxymetazoline (Afrin)
Orphenadrine (Norflex)
Pargyline (Eutonyl)
Parnate
Paroxetine (Paxil)
Pemoline (Cylert)
Percocet
Pethedine (Demerol)

Phendimetrazine (Plegiline)
Phenergen
Phenmetrazine
Phentermine
Phenylephrine (Dimetane, Dristandecongestant, NeoSynephrine)
Phenylpropanolamine (in many cold medicines)
Phenelzine (Nardil)
Procarbazine (Matulane)
Procainamide (Pronestyl)
Protriptyline (Vivactil)
Pseudoephedrine
Oxymetazoline (Afrin)
Quinidine (Quinidex)
Rasagiline (Azilect)
Reboxetine
Reserpine (Serpasil)
Risperidone, Salbutamol
Salmeterol
Selegiline (Eldepryl)
Sertraline (Zoloft)
Sibutramine
Sumatriptan (Imitrex)
Terfenadine (SeldaneD)
Tegretol
Temaril
Tesofensine
Theophylline (TheoDur)
Tianeptine
Toloxatone
Tramadol
Tranylcypromine (Parnate)

Trazodone
Tricyclic antidepressants (Amitriptyline, Elavil)
Trimipramine (Surmontil)
Tryptans
Vanoxerine
Venlafaxine (Effexor)
Viloxazine
Yohimbine
Zimelidine
Ziprasidone (Geodon)

Also avoid the following herbs:

St. John's Wort
Kava
Kratom
Ephedra
Ginseng
Yohimbe
Sinicuichi
Rhodiola Rosea
Kanna
Boswellia
Nutmeg
Scotch Broom
Licorice Root

Using stimulants with MAOIs is particularly dangerous and can be potentially fatal. Using cocaine, amphetamines or MDMA (Ecstasy) with MAOIs may cause a severe increase in blood pressure, increasing the chances for stroke and cerebral haemorrhage and making it possible to overdose on a relatively small amount of cocaine. (A fatality has been recorded involving combining *Peganum harmala* and cocaine. Fatalities resulting from combining amphetamines with pharmaceutical MAOIs are recorded in the medical literature.) Using other serotonin antagonists or precursors with an MAOI can lead to serotonin syndrome.

The main symptom of serotonin symptom may be a severe and long-lasting headache (the same symptom as MAOI tryptamine interaction) and/or fever (as high as 40 °C / 104 °F or more) Other symptoms of serotonin syndrome may include rapid heartbeat, shivering, sweating, dilated pupils, intermittent tremor or twitching, overactive or over-responsive reflexes, hyperactive bowel sounds, high blood pressure. Severe serotonin syndrome may lead to shock, agitated delirium, muscular rigidity and high muscular tension, renal failure, seizures, and can be life-threatening.

Using Tricyclic antidepressants within two weeks of taking MAOIs may cause serious side effects including sudden fever, extremely high blood pressure, convulsions, and death.

Using Fluoxetine (Prozac) within five weeks of taking MAOIs may cause high fever, rigidity, high blood pressure, mental changes, confusion and hypomania.

Using Benzedrine, Benzphetamine, Desipramine, Desoxyn, Dexedrine, Dopamine, Ephedrine (contained in Marax, Quadrinal, and other asthma drugs), Epinephrine, Guanadrel, Guanethidine, Hydralazine, Isoproterenol, L-dopa, Metaraminol, Methyldopa, Mirtazamine, Norepinephrine Oxymetazoline, Phendimetrazine, Phentermine, Phenylephrine, Phenylpropanolamine, Pseudoephedrine, Ritalin, or Venlafaxine with MAOIs may cause a hypertensive crisis (severe spike in blood pressure).

Using Adderall with MAOIs can result in high body temperature, seizure, and in some cases coma.

Using Bupropion (Wellbutrin) within two weeks of taking MAOIs may cause serious side effects such as seizures. Using Buspirone (Buspar) with MAOIs may cause high blood pressure and increased sedative effects. Using Carbamazepine (Tegretol) with MAOIs may result in fever and may increase seizures, especially in epileptics. Using Clomipramine with MAOIs may cause high fever (hyperpyrexia crisis) and seizures. Using CNS depressants with MAOIs may increase the depressant effects.

Using Desipramine (Norpramin, Pertofrane) with MAOIs may result in hypertensive crisis.

Using Dextromethorphan with MAOIs may cause excitement, high blood pressure, and fever, or brief episodes of psychosis.

Using Fenfluramine with MAOIs may result in fever (hyperpyrexia crisis). Using Kava with MAOIs may result in hypotensive crisis (severe blood pressure drop). Using Lithium with MAOIs may cause fever and serotonin syndrome. Using Meperidine (Demerol) with pharmaceutical MAOIs has resulted in deaths from a single dose. Using Metaproterenol or other beta-adrenergic bronchodilators with MAOIs may cause blood pressure elevation and rapid heartbeat. Using Mirtazapine (Remeron) with MAOIs may result in hypertensive crisis. Using Nefazodone (Serzone) may result in high fever. Using Tamaril with MAOIs may increase chance of side effects. Using Terfenadine with MAOIs may cause an increase in MAOI blood levels. Using Theophylline with MAOIs may cause rapid heartbeat and anxiety. Using Trazodone (Desyrel) with MAOIs may result in high fever. Using Tryptophan or L-tryptophan with MAOIs may cause disorientation, confusion, amnesia, delirium agitation, memory impairment, hypomanic signs, shivering. Using Venlafaxine (Effexor) with MAOIs may result in hypertensive crisis. Using Ziprasidone (Geodon) with MAOIs may cause serotonin syndrome. Using alcohol with MAOIs may cause side effects like angina (chest pain) or headaches. The headache may mask or be mistaken for hypertensive crisis caused by MAOI interaction. MAOIs can also increase the sedative effect of alcohol. Using opiates with MAOIs carries a risk of respiratory depression. Using diuretics with MAOIs may cause a greater drop in blood pressure than normal and increase in MAOI blood levels. Using anesthetics with MAOIs may potentiate the anaesthetic effect. Using sleeping pills, tranquilizers (major or minor), or barbiturates with MAOIs may increase the sedative effect.