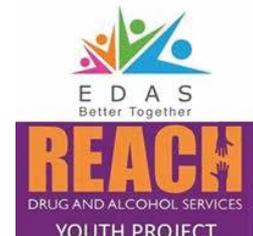


YADAS/REACH YP NEWSLETTER



KETAMINE: A unique kind of club drug becoming even more popular with Dorset teenagers

The rise of Ketamine as a club drug amongst adults has been huge over the last 20 years. Commonly referred to by media as a 'horse tranquiliser', it is a drug that has been used for half a century as a general anaesthetic.



The 21st century has seen its use as a club drug as when used it causes a distortion of sight and sound as well as a detachment from reality. However, it has also been found to be habit-forming and with potentially serious effects from long term use Ketamine is also seeing a large increase in across the UK including young people seeing REACH and YADAS in Dorset.

With use higher than ever, we've put together some basic facts about the effects and risks of Ketamine as well as some helpful Harm Reduction tips to give to people who do insist on taking it despite the risks:

Ketamine Effects

- ▶ Ketamine slows messages down between the message and the brain, causing people to feel detached from their surroundings and losing perception of time (Dissociation) as well as problems with movement and co-ordination
- ▶ If snorted its effects take 5-10 minutes to occur. If swallowed effects usually begin after about 20 minutes
- ▶ Although in high doses it acts as a general anaesthetic, smaller doses can have a stimulating or energising effect
- ▶ High doses can cause what is known as a 'K-Hole', which can be very unpleasant and feel like an out of body experience

Ketamine Risks

- ▶ Its sedative effects mean mixing Ketamine with other sedating drugs such as Heroin, Alcohol and Tranquilisers can slow breathing down with potentially fatal consequences
- ▶ Ketamine kills pain and affects movement so falling and injuries can happen and the severity not be noticed at the time. This is even worse when mixed with alcohol
- ▶ Increasing evidence is showing regular use of Ketamine can cause addiction which can be very difficult to recover from
- ▶ Regular use can cause major problems for people's liver, kidneys and bladder

Harm Reduction

- ▶ No drug is safe. And like any illegal drug, there's no way of knowing the purity or dosage of Ketamine you are taking. If you do take it, always follow the rule - *start low and go slow*
- ▶ Stay hydrated – drinking water rather than fizzy drinks will be easier for your body to process
- ▶ Ketamine can make you physically sick. Make sure anyone who has taken it falls asleep on their side so they don't choke
- ▶ If you do take Ketamine, don't mix it other drugs. It can have unpredictable effects
- ▶ Always stay with friends, look out for each other and make sure others know what you've taken

Could the new medical uses for Cannabis be fooling young people into thinking it's safe?

After years of debate, in November 2018 the UK government finally allowed for cannabis to be prescribed for medical use in certain situations by specialists. New areas for treatment using cannabis have arisen, including for seizures, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and even cancer.

With all these claims of cannabis being a kind of 'snake oil' cure-all, EDAS keyworkers have faced increasing claims from young people of evidence that this is a sign of using cannabis not only being safe but also beneficial to their lives.

What is crucial is that very few of these claims have been thoroughly researched (this is only just beginning!), and also the fact that many drugs with (including Heroin, Morphine and Benzodiazepines) are both crucial for medical use but also highly dangerous drugs of abuse.

What is for certain, as more and more studies indicate, is the link between heavy use of cannabis and the risk of severe mental health problems developing. Something that professionals should be educating young people on to help them make their choices.

