



EDAS REACH YP NEWSLETTER

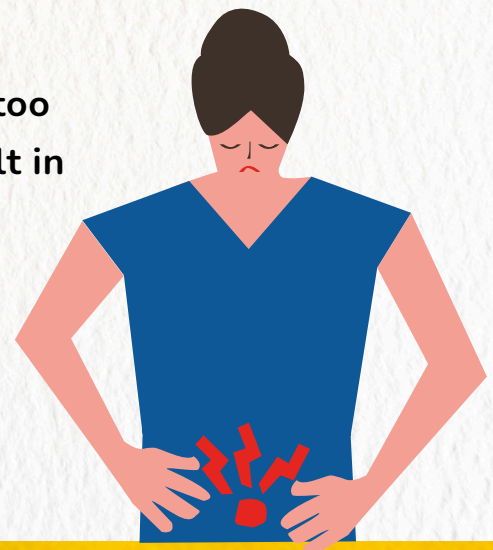
Understanding the Health Risks of Ketamine Use

Ketamine has gained attention in recent years due to its potential therapeutic uses in medicine and its popularity as a recreational drug. While it may offer benefits in controlled medical settings, its misuse can have serious health implications, especially for bladder health.

Ketamine is a dissociative anaesthetic originally developed for medical and veterinary use. In clinical environments, it's used for anaesthesia and, more recently, for treatment-resistant depression. Recreationally, it is often sought for its euphoric and hallucinogenic effects. However, frequent or high-dose consumption can lead to severe physical and mental health consequences.

Using ketamine may be fun, but using it too often can damage your bladder and result in a serious condition known as **Ketamine Bladder Syndrome or K-Bladder** (a.k.a. Ketamine Cystitis).

Continue reading...



Ketamine Bladder: What You Need to Know

One of the most concerning long-term effects of frequent ketamine use is its damage to the bladder and urinary system.

Ketamine and its metabolites are excreted through the urinary system. Repeated exposure damages the *urothelial lining* (the bladder's protective barrier), leading to inflammation and scarring. Over time, this can result in a loss of bladder capacity, fibrosis, and even permanent dysfunction requiring surgery.

Ketamine-Induced Cystitis (KIC): A Growing Concern

Ketamine-induced cystitis (KIC) is a painful condition caused by damage to the bladder lining due to frequent ketamine use. It often leads to severe discomfort, urinary frequency, and incontinence.

Symptoms to Watch For:

- Burning sensation during urination
- Urinary urgency (the feeling of needing to pee right away despite the bladder not being full) and frequency (having to pee more than usual)
- Pelvic pain or pressure
- Blood in urine (hematuria)



**Frequency
of Urination**



**Pelvic Pain
or Pressure**



**Sudden
Urgency**

Increased Risks of Ketamine Bladder



If damage continues, symptoms get worse and you may also experience incontinence (urine leaking out when you don't want it to). Your bladder capacity may also shrink. In men, ketamine cystitis can also result in erectile dysfunction (inability to get or maintain an erection).

If the damage goes too far, ketamine cystitis can be debilitating and permanent if the bladder becomes too damaged. A few young people have had to have their damaged bladder removed, which leaves men unable to get a natural erection and both genders unable to urinate naturally for life.

The Broader Impacts of Ketamine



Beyond bladder health, frequent ketamine use can lead to:

- Cognitive impairment
- Liver and kidney damage
- Severe abdominal pain often called ketamine cramps or “k-cramps”
- Dependency and withdrawal symptoms
- Mental health challenges such as depression and anxiety

What Can Be Done?

If you think you are experiencing symptoms related to ketamine use, such as ketamine cystitis, the most important thing to do is **stop using ketamine**. In the early stages, quitting ketamine completely typically results in either a total or a significant reduction of symptoms for the majority of people.

You can reach out to our support services at **REACH YP** for help reducing or quitting ketamine use.

If your symptoms are bad enough, go see your GP.



Things to Consider If You Choose to Consume Ketamine...



- **Reduce the amount and frequency.** Taking bigger amounts of ketamine, and taking it frequently, means higher risks. The most severe harms, including permanent bladder damage, affect people who take ketamine regularly.
- **First time users should be especially cautious with dose.**
- **Don't mix!** Mixing drugs makes the effects on your body and mind even harder to predict and manage. People can die after taking ketamine or by combining with other drugs, particularly alcohol.
- **If you are anxious, or feeling down, the drug may exaggerate these feelings and give you a terrible experience.** Additionally, if you are in a stressful, unfamiliar environment with strangers, the risk of having a bad time, or experiencing physical harm, is increased.
- It's important to keep track of whether you or your friends are taking increasingly large amounts, or using ketamine increasingly often, as this can be a sign of an addiction developing.
- **In the event of an emergency always call 999.**

Don't let ketamine take the p!***

If ketamine or any other substance use is affecting your health, family, relationships, school, work, finances, or other life situations, or you're concerned about a loved one, we are here to support you.

**The EDAS/REACH Young People's Service are here to help.
Get in touch with us on 01202 741414 or 0800 0434656 – Option 2.**



EDAS.ReachYP



edasreach.yip



ypreferrals@edasuk.org



www.edasuk.org/yp

