

Tailored Resources for Parents: Supporting a Child Using Ketamine



What is Ketamine?

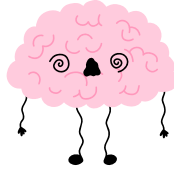


Ketamine is a dissociative anaesthetic that is used both medically and recreationally. While it has therapeutic applications, misuse can lead to significant physical and psychological harm.

Why is My Child Using Ketamine?

Young people may experiment with ketamine for various reasons:

- **Curiosity or peer influence**
- **Seeking escape from stress or trauma**
- **Self-medicating for anxiety or depression**
- **Thrill-seeking or boredom**



Signs of Ketamine Use

- Confusion, drowsiness, or appearing "spaced out"
- Difficulty walking or slurred speech
- Loss of memory of events while under the influence
- Frequent bathroom use (potential signs of bladder damage)
- Mood swings, irritability, or withdrawal from family

How to Respond as a Parent

- ✓ **Stay calm and open-minded** – avoid accusations or punishments.
- ✓ **Educate yourself** – learn about ketamine's risks and effects.
- ✓ **Have open conversations** – listen without judgment.
- ✓ **Encourage professional help** – connect them with a drug and alcohol service.
- ✓ **Set healthy boundaries** – offer support but do not enable the behaviour.



Harm Reduction Tips (If They Are Not Ready to Stop)

If your child is not ready to stop using ketamine, harm reduction strategies can reduce the risk of serious harm.



Key Harm Reduction Tips:

- **Avoid frequent or high doses** to prevent dependence and bladder damage.
- **Do not mix with alcohol or depressants** – can cause dangerous respiratory depression.
- **Use in a safe environment** with trusted people.
- **Stay hydrated and urinate regularly** to reduce bladder problems.
- **Take breaks from use** to prevent long-term damage.
- **Seek medical help** for urinary pain, difficulty urinating, or blood in urine (signs of Ketamine Bladder Syndrome).

How to Talk to Your Child About Ketamine

Step 1: Prepare Yourself

- Learn about ketamine so you can have an informed conversation.
- Choose a calm, private moment to talk – avoid confrontations when they are under the influence.

Step 2: Start the Conversation

Use **open-ended questions** to encourage discussion:

- *"I've noticed you've been acting differently lately, is everything okay?"*
- *"I know ketamine is something young people experiment with. Can we talk about what you know?"*
- *"I'm not here to judge you, I just want to understand why you're using it."*

Step 3: Express Your Concerns Without Blame

- Avoid accusations: *"You're ruining your life with drugs."* ❌
- Use "I" statements: *"I'm worried about how ketamine might be affecting your health."* ✅

Step 4: Offer Support and Solutions

- **Ask what support they need** – "Would you be open to talking to someone about this?"
- **Discuss harm reduction** if they are not ready to stop.
- **Set clear but supportive boundaries** – let them know you care and want to help.



Support Services and Resources

Helplines & Support Groups

- **EDAS (Essential Drugs and Alcohol Services)** – Local specialist support for Carers and Parents (www.edasuk.org)
- **REACH Young People's Specialist Substance Misuse Service** – local specialist support for young people who reside in Dorset under 18 years of age (www.edasuk.org/support/yp/)
Tel: **0800 043 4656 opt 2**
- **Adfam** – Support for families affected by substance use (www.adfam.org.uk)
- **FRANK** – Confidential drug advice (www.talktofrank.com)
- **Young Minds** – Mental health support for young people (www.youngminds.org.uk)

Final Thought for Parents

Supporting a child through ketamine use is challenging, but you are not alone. Being informed, staying connected, and seeking professional guidance can make a significant difference in helping your child make safer choices and, ultimately, move toward positive change.

For more tailored support, contact **EDAS or a local family support service.**



The EDAS REACH Young People's team is here to help!
Get in touch with us on 01202 741414 or 0800 0434656 - option 1.



EDAS.ReachYP



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