

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is Ketamine?

Ketamine is a very old medication with new uses. Up until recently, Ketamine has been used as an anesthetic medication for surgical procedures. Research over the past 20 years has shown Ketamine to be very effective for treating depression, anxiety, bipolar depression, PTSD and OCD. Ketamine works by binding to various receptors in the brain that promote regrowth and connections between brain cells.

## What is Spravato (esketamine)

Spravato (esketamine) is derived from Ketamine. Ketamine is made up of equal parts of (S)-ketamine and (R)-Ketamine, which are mirror images of each other. Both parts of Ketamine have been shown to promote antidepressant effects, but (S)-Ketamine was isolated and has been heavily researched due to its greater potency at the NMDA receptor. (S)-Ketamine is the active component of Spravato (esketamine).

## Do Ketamine or Spravato replace my antidepressant?

No. Ketamine and Spravato have been studied as add-on treatments for depression.

## What are the common side effects?

- The most common side effects are nausea and fatigue. Zofran will be offered prior to treatments to help minimize this side effect.
- Dissociations are common and are described as a **temporary** feeling of:
  - things being in slow motion or unreal
  - being separated from reality
  - looking at things from outside the body
  - being a spectator
  - objects looking different
  - colors seeming more dull or brighter than usual
  - time speeding up or slowing down
  - seeing things through a fog or having tunnel vision
  - losing track of time or what is happening in the environment
  - your body having changed
  - a dream-like state with a floating calm sensation

## Is there a link between how effective the medication is and the scale of dissociations?

There have been conflicting results in research studies; however, most studies indicate that there is no correlation between the degree of dissociation and the antidepressant effect.

## How long are appointments?

You will be monitored for at least 2 hours after receiving your treatment of ketamine or Spravato, so you will need to make sure you have plenty of time in your schedule. There are no exceptions to the minimum monitoring time.

**How will I feel after my treatment? Can I return to work?**

We advise you to go directly home after your first couple of treatments. After you have had a couple of treatments, you will have a better idea of how the medication makes you feel. It is normal to feel slightly nauseous, light-headed, intoxicated, and/or fatigued. We generally advise you take the remainder of the day off from work after your treatments.

**How many treatments will I need to feel better?**

Some people notice relief of symptoms after the first treatment, and, for others, it can take up to 6 weeks of twice weekly treatments. After you have responded to the treatments, you will discuss a plan with your about how to proceed with maintenance treatment. Maintenance treatments can range from 1 to 4 times per month. Studies indicate maintenance treatment greatly reduces the rates of relapse of symptoms.

**Are there any medical conditions that exclude me from treatment?**

Treatments with Ketamine and Spravato are very safe overall. Patients with a history of uncontrolled high blood pressure, liver disease, kidney disease or neurological disorders may require a letter of clearance from their primary care provider.

**What if I have a bad experience during treatment?**

A negative experience during treatment is rare but does happen. Please discuss the experience with your provider. Staff will be available throughout your treatment to help with any negative experiences. Although it can be scary, a bad experience does not affect future treatments, and many people continue in treatment without problems. We recommend scheduling therapy sessions for the day after treatments to process your experience.

**Are Ketamine and Spravato addictive?**

Ketamine itself has not been shown to have addictive properties. In fact, recent research suggest that Ketamine can be an effective treatment for various addictions. If you have a history of substance abuse, it does not exclude you from treatment but it is important to discuss your relationship with substances with your doctor so they can develop the appropriate treatment plan for you.

**Can I drive home after my treatment?**

No. You will need a ride home after your treatments, and you may not drive for the remainder of the day. There are no exceptions. Please ensure you are able to secure a consistent ride from treatments.

**Can I eat prior to my appointment?**

We recommend fasting for 3-4 hours prior to your treatment to decrease the risk of getting nauseous. Please stay hydrated by drinking normal amounts of fluids.

**Will my insurance cover the treatments?**

Spravato is often covered by health insurance plans following a prior authorization. Ketamine is not currently covered by health insurance plans and is an out-of-pocket expense.