

Tips for achieving better results from your Ketamine Infusions

Dress comfortably so that you may relax during your infusion; Feel free to take off your shoes to make you more comfortable.

Optimizing your state-of-mind prior-to & during an infusion is vital. Many things can have either a positive or negative effect on your session.

- 1) Blocking outside noise is helpful; we have noise-canceling headphones or earplugs for you to use
- 2) Many people find music very helpful; we suggest a playlist of meditative music without lyrics. You may use your own phone with your own playlist, but keep in mind, an incoming text or call can be extremely disruptive to your session
- 3) Many patients prefer to keep their eyes closed during their infusion, but we also have eye masks for you to use if you like.

The day before an infusion & the day of an infusion, try to avoid situations that will bring you stress, anxiety, or anger, such as a difficult family member or neighbor. Also avoid sad or scary movies/shows the day before an infusion. Again, what goes into your brain prior-to & during an infusion can impact whether your session is positive or negative.

Whoever is driving you to & from your session should understand that being supportive & positive is the most helpful thing they can do for you.

If your phone is nearby during infusions, please remember to mute, "do not disturb", or turn it off.

Bring sunglasses to wear when you leave; you may be more light sensitive after your infusion.

You are welcome to bring a blanket or pillow; we also have those things here for you to use.

Hydrate well the day before & choose nutrition that is healthy; avoid alcohol, marijuana, & benzodiazepines the day of your infusion.

Practice meditating; choose several positive & happy mantras. If your ketamine infusion begins to cause anxiety, these practices can help you redirect your thoughts away from the anxious thoughts or dreams.

Please communicate with us during your infusion if you begin to feel anxious or tense; we have several things that we can do to reduce those feelings:

- 1) We can help you talk through your feelings & redirect your thoughts.
- 2) We can slow down the infusion.

3) We try to avoid giving benzodiazepines for anxiety but we have alternative techniques that can take the edge off of your anxiety.

Other things to keep in mind about ketamine infusions

Ketamine is not a cure...it will not cure your chronic pain, it will not cure your depression, it will not heal your underlying traumas, it will not cure any other illnesses. It is a tool to help, just like other medications & treatments. But like other treatments, you will need to keep utilizing it to continue receiving the benefits that it brings you.

It is a myth that ketamine will make a depressed person happy. In reality, ketamine treatments will make you feel more resilient. The stressors do not change... what changes is your ability to cope & your willingness to engage in other treatments, both for mental health & physical health.

One infusion will not do much, even if you feel a positive result. Ketamine needs to build up in your system in order for the effects to be longer-lasting. It needs time to reset the NMDA receptors & help your synapses heal. Don't give up early... trust the process.

What dose is best for my "XYZ" diagnosis? *Because every person is different, it is difficult to know what your best dose will be. But there are guidelines for starting points & we can go up or down from there, based on your feedback. So being honest with your provider is important. A good clinic & provider will be willing to adjust up or down as needed.*

It is very common that you'll still have good days & bad days. **Some people even get a little worse after an infusion before they begin to feel better overall; it's called a post-infusion flare.** Utilize all of the tools that you know to manage your times of down-swing. And know that it will get better!

Do some people develop a tolerance to ketamine? *Yes, it is possible. Just like with many medications, there doesn't seem to be a way to prevent it. Communicate with us if your infusions aren't helping as they used to. KetAssure has a protocol where we can increase your dose by 10% if your dose seems to start to lose it's effectiveness. From what we've observed & heard from other providers, this may happen to long-term ketamine users about once a year. That's why it can be important to start at the lowest dose that's effective for you.*

I've heard that some people are able to come off of their antidepressants... is that true? *In some cases, with the supervision of their mental health provider, some people have been able to reduce or eliminate their antidepressants, mood stabilizers, &/or anti-anxiety medicines. However, most people do continue to utilize antidepressants in combination with ketamine; they find that the ketamine seems to cause the anti-depressants to work more effectively.*

If you develop pain that feels like it's in the location of your bladder, it's possible that the ketamine is causing this pain. It's rare with lower doses for mood disorders, but with higher doses, the ketamine being metabolized

by your body can irritate your bladder. Let us know... we have a list of OTC medications that can help. Also, if you've been diagnosed with Interstitial Cystitis, it's important that we know... we will have you take those same OTC medications from the start and we can give a little extra saline at the end to flush the metabolites faster.

Remember to visit the bathroom before each infusion!

Wherever you receive your ketamine infusions, that clinic should be willing to share with you what dose you are receiving, over how much time, & what other medications you will receive along with the ketamine. Many clinics are using IV magnesium to work synergistically with ketamine & may also need to give you medicine to treat elevated blood pressures or nausea. You should always be told what you are being given; if any place doesn't want to tell you, consider a different clinic.

We invite you to try keeping a journal of your daily mood as a way to track your progress. This is especially helpful if your changes happen more slowly. However, if you have OCD, keeping a journal may not be a good idea as it may cause you to obsess over it. Your entries don't need to be very long, just meaningful to you. Maybe even give your mood a number as a way to quantify your current status and track your progress. When you read back over several days or a week of entries, you'll be surprised at your progress!

Finally, if you don't think ketamine will work, chances are that it will NOT work. You must tell yourself that the ketamine is making changes in your body, it's healing your synapses that have become damaged through stress over time. Sometimes the changes are subtle & you may not pick up on those small clues that things are improving.

The improvements have been described by some as "sliding a dimmer switch" rather than "flipping a switch"... things may brighten slowly!

Part of the process is knowing that the ketamine truly is healing your body; the other part of the process is becoming aware of those subtle changes. You will not go from 0-60 overnight, & if you're convinced that it isn't working, then it won't, & you'll be back too square one with yourself. As you are trusting the process, do small things that bring you pleasure.

Get out of the house at least **daily**. Go for a walk. Get coffee with a friend. Take your dog to the park. Go for a Jeep or motorcycle ride. Add healthy habits that keep you busy and you will find happiness!

Comments from various ketamine patients about their experiences:

"Going for my first infusion, I was so nervous I could barely speak at the beginning. I made small talk while waiting for the ketamine to kick in...it helped take my mind off of the anxiety. But the infusion went great & was ten times easier than I expected."

"Ketamine has helped in ways I didn't necessarily expect. It reduced my focus & concern on my issues."

"The dissociation is dreamlike - if managed well, the visions can be beautiful & even breathtaking. I've said "wow" on more than one occasion. If the visions turn negative, let your provider know."

“Ketamine is like a SciFi movie where the character is in another dimension.”

“A ketamine infusion is like being on a 3-D ride at Disney World!”

“I’m very social & I tried to chat. But when I let my mind go & fully relax, when I meditate & visualize my issues leaving my body, I realize that the positive effects of the infusions last longer. I knew it sounds totally goonie & I wouldn’t have believed such things would work, ever!”

“I really wasn’t aware of how my pain was improving until I realized one day that tying my shoes was much easier than it normally was! As I looked back, I realized that I had been slowly improving over the past week & it made me laugh out loud when I realized the progress I had achieved.”

“I think the lights & vivid colors that we see during an infusion is the light within our soul. While it sometimes dims in our reality, ketamine recharges it. Brightens it, brightens us.”