



Ketamine Therapy

Preparation Guide

By Swahn Balanced Health

SWAHN BALANCED HEALTH

Optimize your life through balanced mind and body



Why is preparation important?

Ketamine is a powerful molecule that can create experiences in the mind of the user they may have considered impossible. It can alter your perception of yourself, the world, and even reality. Many people feel they have profound mystical experiences they treasure for the rest of their lives where insights are gained, suppressed trauma is released, or universal truths are revealed, but sometimes the experience can be strange, frightening, or overwhelming. For these reasons, it is important to prepare both your body and mind prior to receiving your ketamine treatment. This can include making sure you get enough sleep and avoid substances such as alcohol before your treatment, but also that you make every effort to put yourself in a positive mindset.

What can I do to prepare?

Though the experiences described above are not experienced by everyone and are dependent on dose and individual response, the potential exists for your experience to be positive or negative depending on **set** and **setting**. **Set** refers to your mindset, and only you can ensure you are in an optimal mindset. **Setting** refers to the environment you are in during the experience. We provide a peaceful, comfortable area for you to feel safe and relaxed throughout your experience. You may bring a trusted person who has a soothing influence on you to be with you during your treatment. You may also play music on a personal device or we can provide music for you. Eye coverings are available if you prefer. Wear comfortable clothing the day of your appointment and consider dressing in layers. You

may also bring a personal pillow and blanket if you prefer.

Before your treatment, avoid substances, activities, and items which can negatively impact your mind and body. Take your prescribed medications as ordered, but avoid other stimulants and depressants as this could alter your experience. If you regularly consume a lot of caffeine and have withdrawal headaches without it, consider a smaller amount the day of your treatment, such as a cup of tea instead of coffee. Avoid watching TV shows and movies with excessive amounts of violence or consuming negative news that increases your stress. Be cognizant of what you drink, eat, watch, and read as all of this can affect your body and mind. A small, healthy meal a couple hours prior to treatment helps maintain stable blood sugar levels and can reduce the potential for nausea.

How do I make the most of my experience?

Ketamine is often grouped with the class of drugs known as “psychedelics,” from the Greek words for psyche (meaning soul or mind) and deloun (to manifest), due to their profound cognitive effects. One effective way to utilize ketamine therapy is to integrate it with psychotherapy. This helps integrate the experience with professional guidance. Refer to our “Find a Therapist” page on our website to find a therapist that fits you and your needs. Incorporating psychotherapy before or after ketamine treatments can help patients prepare for their mental journeys, create intentions, learn grounding skills to use during treatment, and integrate their experiences after each session. It should be noted our clinic does not provide psychotherapists as a part of our services.

Personal practice of meditation can be useful prior to the treatment to help develop the ability to quiet your thoughts, mindfully observe your present moment, and ground yourself during the experience. It is helpful to reflect on your thoughts and feelings before the experience and to identify

what your hopes are for treatment. Using a journal to record your thoughts can be a therapeutic practice in itself but is highly recommended during this transformative time to help you remember your insights before, during, and after therapy. Before each infusion, it is beneficial to set an intention. Your intention doesn't need to be complicated and can be goals for therapy, feelings you want to explore, ways you want to live your life better, or whatever you want it to be. "I want to understand my mind better," "be more loving," and "surrender to the experience" are all valid intentions. Having an intention set ahead of time may provide an anchor in the event you experience something difficult or challenging. Most individuals who experience anxiety or fear during their experience find relief and greater insight if they just surrender to the experience. We will address any distress you may experience and have medications available, but the most effective therapeutic intervention is often to encourage you to "let go and float downstream, see where your thoughts take you, and be open to what the experience reveals." You did all the preparation and planning ahead of time, so now you can relax and enjoy. If you are working with a therapist, one option for our treatments is ketamine-assisted psychotherapy sessions where the dissociative state produced by the medication is utilized to work through emotional or psychological barriers encountered during previous sessions.

What happens after my treatment?

After your treatment, you may experience fatigue, weakness, and slight dizziness for a couple hours. You will not be capable of operating a vehicle and MUST have someone available to transport you after treatment. Within 12 hours, you should return to functioning normally.

Ketamine produces a dissociative effect, meaning you are removed from your usual state of mind and perspective. You may experience emotions and feelings that have been buried or suppressed. This more vulnerable, emotional state can last for several days as your mind is forming new connections

and releasing stored information.

Integrating your experience into your life is a critical step. What insights did you gain? Did you learn anything about yourself, your problems, or your relationships? How has your perspective changed? Self-reflection and writing in your journal as soon as possible after your infusion (or even during if you are able or have someone to take notes for you) is the best way to capture and retain all the insights from your experience. You can then work to make changes in your life based on the new knowledge. After your treatment is a perfect time to set new intentions for your life and to act on positive insights. Major life changes are common after such a profound experience, but any drastic changes should be considered carefully for the 48 hours after infusion to ensure the effects of the medication have worn off and you have fully returned to sound decision-making capacity. If you are working with a therapist, you should plan to have an appointment with them the day after your infusion so they can help you integrate the experience and to maximize the benefits.