

# Sedating your child with ketamine to reduce distress during a procedure

Children's Emergency Department

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Information for Patients, Parents & Carers

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## Why is my child being sedated?

Your child needs a medical treatment (for example stitches, treatment of a broken bone) which may be painful or distressing for them. So that this treatment can be carried out more easily, with less distress and pain for your child, the medical team wish to use a drug called ketamine to sedate them.

Sedation is a process of using medicine to make them sleepy and relaxed. It is normal that they may not remember the procedure at all, or remember only small amounts.

Ketamine is commonly used in hospitals for sedation of children. Ketamine is given via an injection into a vein. Your child will be cared for by a senior doctor and nurse from the Children's Emergency Department.

## What are the side effects to be aware of?

- Your child may seem to be awake after receiving ketamine.
- Your child may move a little without obvious cause; this is normal.
- Your child's eyes may twitch; this is normal.
- Your child may report odd dreams on waking up, and may become a little agitated (less than 1 in 5 children experience this).
- 1 in 10 children develop a rash.
- 1 in 10 children are sick (vomit).
- 1 in 10 children will have watery eyes, or may drool.
- Very rarely the vocal cords can close. Extremely rarely this can mean a general anaesthetic needs to be given, with a breathing tube placed in their windpipe.

The hospital doctors are trained to recognise and deal with any complications your child may have.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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## How can I help my child?

Before your child is sedated it is good to reassure them by talking to them calmly and play with them quietly, for example, reading a book. You may stay with them during the procedure and staff may ask you to talk to your child during the procedure to help comfort them.

After the procedure, it will help for you to stay with your child so that they recognise a familiar face when they wake up. When they are awake, talk to your child and help keep them settled so they are relaxed as the medicine wears off.

## How should I care for my child at home?

Most children wake up after a few minutes and will fully recover within 1 to 2 hours. Your child will be safe to go home once they are fully awake, can walk unaided, and can drink without being sick.

Sometimes after sedation children can be a bit confused, sleepy or clumsy and so you need to be watchful in caring for them for the next 24 hours. They should avoid activities such as riding a bike, sports and active play. Make sure they are supervised when bathing too.

Clear fluids (but not fizzy or sugary drinks) should be encouraged, but do not allow them to eat until at least 2 hours have passed at home without any problems. Give light meals only until the following day.

Your child may sleep as normal or be more tired than usual. They may also have more vivid dreams for 1 or 2 nights.

## Contact details

If you have any concerns you can contact the NHS helpline on 111 for advice.

## Giving us your feedback

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