

## Patient Information Sheet – Intravenous ketamine

### Intravenous ketamine information

#### *Why am I having intravenous ketamine?*

This infusion is carried out to see if this type of drug will reduce the amount of pain that you are suffering. There are studies in the pain literature that suggest in some pain states, ketamine may be useful. There are a variety of methods used to assess its potential for use. If this initial infusion is useful and significantly reduces your pain you may be asked to return for repeat infusions. If you have little or no pain on your appointment date, please contact the Pain Clinic for advice (see below for details).

#### *What is a ketamine infusion?*

Ketamine is an anaesthetic drug that has pain-relieving properties when used in small doses. You will be given the drug slowly through a drip in the back of your hand or arm. The initial infusion takes approximately 4 hours and during this time you will be attached to a heart rate and blood pressure monitor. You will be given an appropriate dose for your size and weight. You may also be prescribed an anti-nausea medication.

The nurse will ask you to measure your pain on a scale by indicating verbally which best describes the intensity of your pain at the beginning and end of the infusion.

0 = No pain \_\_\_\_\_ 10 = Worst pain you can imagine

#### *How will I feel afterwards?*

You may experience the following symptoms during and after the test dizziness, drowsiness, itchiness, nausea and vomiting. These side effects are usually short lived, but occasionally they may be more troublesome and last a few days. Please tell the nurse or doctor if you experience any these symptoms.

You will need to be taken home by a responsible adult on the day of the procedure. You should be able to return to your normal activity the following day, although you should not drive or drink alcohol for 24 hours following the procedure

#### *Are there any risks involved in a ketamine infusion?*

There is an element of risk involved in all the procedures and treatments that you may have at the pain clinic. However you should remember that these risks are usually minimal. Your doctor will discuss these fully before your procedure and will be happy to answer all your questions. You will need to complete a patient consent agreement prior to the infusion.

#### *What happens afterwards?*

The Pain Nurse will phone you between 2-5 days after the infusion and ask about the level of pain and how you are feeling. Depending on the results, you may be asked to return for a repeat infusion, you may be asked to return to the clinic to see the pain specialist or you may be referred back to your own GP. Unfortunately ketamine has no important effect, and in this case there is no indication to carry this on. Your pain specialist will communicate the plans to both yourself and your GP and if you have any queries please contact the Pain Services.

#### *Who should I contact if I have any problems following treatment?*

You can contact the Pain Clinic on **09 486 8972** between 9-3pm, Monday to Friday. Outside these hours you should contact your own GP or if you have severe symptoms please present to the ED of either NSH or Waitakere Hospital. Before you leave we will give you a discharge letter and if you need to present to your GP or ED please take this with you.

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